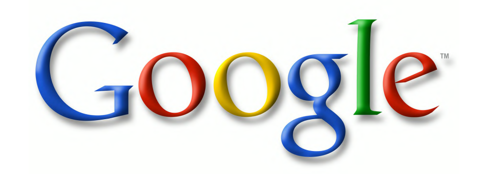
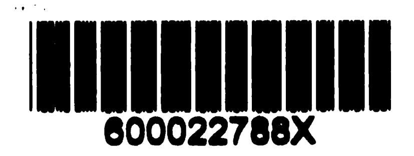


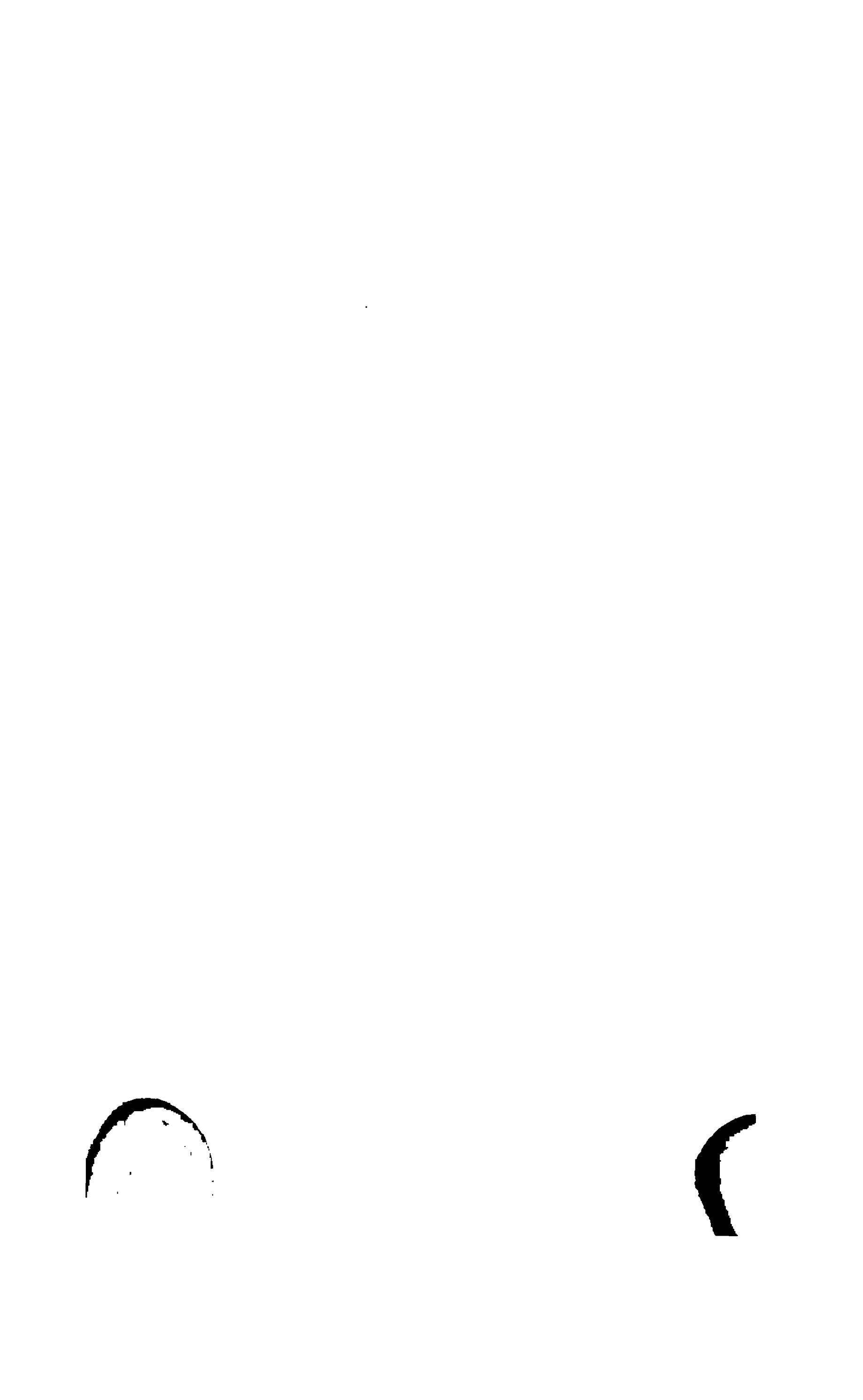





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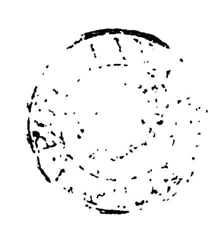

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OF

PARIS LIFE:



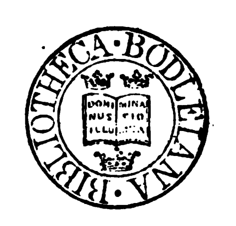
BEING

A RECORD OF THE POLITICS, ART, FASHION, AND ANECDOTE OF PARIS DURING THE PAST EIGHTEEN MONTHS.

BY CHRONIQUEUSE.

Second Edition.

LONDON: TINSLEY, BROTHERS, 18, CATHERINE STREET.
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PREFACE.

In sending forth this Volume I feel I cannot plead for it usefulness, philosophical interest, or the promulgation of new ideas. To be instructive and amusing at one and the same time is indeed difficult, therefore if I attain one of these ends, that of amusing my readers, I shall have gratified my highest ambition.

CHRONIQUEUSE.

Paris,
January 1, 1861.

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PHOTOGRAPHS OF PARIS LIFE.

LETTER I.

Departure of Soldiers for Italy—Empress commended "to the charge of the People"—Perpetual Motion of Fashion—And Old-Fashioned Mantilla revived—The New Fourreau, or Old Casaque—Little Bonnets—Exhibition of Paintings at the Palais de l'Industrie—The Gardens of Paris—New Comedy by George Sand—Halcyon days of Lodging-house Keepers—The "Old Guard."

Paris, Wednesday, May 4, 1859.

WERE the traveller who left Paris a fortnight ago suddenly to return to that noted City of Pleasures, he would certainly be astonished at the wonderful change wrought in so short a time in the general aspect of the town. Not that the beautiful palaces, magnificent gardens, and fairy-like fountains have changed their places; not that there are fewer or less brilliant equipages in the Bois de Boulogne; not that the *beau monde* is less gay, but the army—that great, and, in Paris, conspicuous body of men—is in the bustle and confusion which always follows a declaration of war. The soldier who used to stroll so leisurely and gaily along the principal streets, occasionally bestowing a benignant smile on some perambulatory nursery-maid, or heartily shaking hands with a comrade, has now other and more serious things to think of; the nursery-maid is passed unheeded and uncared-for, and the

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comrade receives but a hasty nod of recognition. The French are decidedly a martial people—the soldiers seem perfectly delighted at the idea of war; but affecting scenes may be witnessed almost every night at the Lyons Railway terminus, when the moment of parting comes and the final good-bye has to be said. Fathers parting from children, husbands from wives, brothers from sisters, would make the scene heart-rending, were it not that those left behind, and whom one would imagine quite crushed and hopeless, seem, on the contrary, perfectly imbued with the idea that the parting relative is certain to come back (and soon, too) with the "épaulettes" which every French soldier so desires.

The Emperor's proclamation, issued yesterday, has been received with the greatest enthusiasm. His speaking of leaving the Empress and the Prince Imperial "to the charge of the people" was certainly a most happy idea; for every Frenchman will now feel that the Empress and Prince are confided to him personally, and will act accordingly. It was thought that the Emperor would leave on Saturday for the seat of war, but the report now is that next Thursday is the day fixed for his Majesty's departure. On Tuesday evening there was a reception at the Tuileries, which exceeded in brilliancy any given this year. The Diplomatic Corps was well represented—while a large number of private individuals —the *élite* of French society—were present. The Empress was looking most lovely, having lost the air of fatigue which she had before Lent.

In spite of the pre-occupation of mind which the approaching war must occasion Her Majesty, I observe that she still continues to be the leader of the fashion, and her toilettes this spring are, if possible, more *recherché* than ever. It has been said that perpetual motion was an impossibility: but the

unceasing change of fashions in Paris certainly must convince even the most incredulous that the Paris dressmakers have rendered perpetual motion practicable. They are now bringing in fashion mantillas of certainly fifteen, if not twenty years back. Who does not remember the black silk mantillas with long tabs in front, and loose flowing back, whose only decoration was a small flounce of the same material? In fact, almost the same shape as the modern circular cloak, except being fastened up at the arms with black silk braiding, which leaves the hands quite uncovered. This simple garment is very pretty, and quite the rage for morning costume; the same shape made of black silk, embroidered with jet beads, and trimmed with a deep row of guipure or Chantilly lace, is of the best possible taste for the "toilette habillée." The "Parisiennes" seem determined to make themselves more of the churn shape than ever, as all skirts to dresses are now made in gores, being wide at the bottom and gradually diminishing till there remain few if any gathers to be sewn into the body. This mania for gore skirts has brought the "Fourreau" into great favour, though it was at first feared it would not take. The "Fourreau" is nothing more nor less than an elongated casaque, or long Basque, which has been so fashionable for several seasons, except that the former comes quite down to the feet, is fastened up the front with large buttons, and an under skirt of the same material is consequently not required. The sleeve which is made for this handsome, but perhaps peculiar dress, is the long Venetian, or, as they have re-named it, "Magician sleeve," cut very far up the arm, so that the whole of the undersleeve may be seen.

Closed undersleeves are decidedly in vogue this spring; it was thought, although the linen closed sleeves had met with

such general favour in the winter, that as soon as spring, with her genial breezes should come, the open muslin sleeve would again be resorted to; but, alas! for the expectation of the *Lingère's* (who delight in the wide sleeve, on account of the quantity of lace it requires), the closed sleeve still reigns supreme for walking or carriage dress, while the flowing sleeve is confined to dinner or eveniug toilette.

Bonnets seem to be rather smaller than in the winter, and our English *belles* still persist in saying that one of these fine days Madame Ode Laure, or Hocquet, will turn out as *a new idea* the unfortunate little bonnet (?) which has been so in vogue in London this last year; but I doubt it greatly, for although the "crush" is very becoming to some faces (and especially to the round, rosy ones of the English girls), its back view is too ugly ever to be adopted by the tasty French *modistes.*

The Exhibition of Paintings of Living Artists at the Palais de l'Industrie is still drawing crowds of appreciative and discriminating visitors. The Exhibition is generally considered better than the one two years ago, although many of the celebrated artists who generally contribute have nothing this year. The admission is free on Sundays, so as to give all classes a chance of seeing and admiring the works of art, and it is estimated that over forty thousand persons visited the Exhibition last Sunday. The order that is preserved by these people is something wonderful; they pass in quietly and peaceably, look at the pictures quickly (for they know there are others waiting outside for admission), and, in fact, conduct themselves in a manner that might be well imitated by many of the persons who come on the pay days.

It is only when the weather will have become insufferably hot that the citizens of Paris will appreciate the beautiful

garden which has been laid out so recently behind the Palais de l'Industrie; in fact, it is in a rather out-of-the-way place, and for that very reason, will be more agreeable than many others more exposed. The children have found it out, though, and are only waiting for the fountain to be finished, to make it a grand playground; I am sure in their little hearts they bless the Emperor Napoleon for all the beautiful places he has caused to be made for their gratification and well-being. The Prè Catalan, the fairy-like garden in the Bois de Boulogne, has been most splendidly decorated this year, and draws crowds of the promenaders in the Bois, who seem never tired of listening to the inspiriting strains of the regimental bands and looking at the graceful *danseuses* in the "Théâtre des Fleurs." It is certainly a pleasant place of amusement, and becomes doubly so when the heat of the weather renders theatre-going impossible.

The opera season at the "Italiens" is over, though "Poliuto" would doubtless have been attractive for some time to come. Mme. Penco has made herself quite a favourite, while Tamberlik is as great a pet as ever among the opera-goers. The "Gymnase," generally supposed to be a favourite place of amusement for the Empress, has been giving a three act comedy by Madame George Sand, entitled "Maguerite de St. Gemme." The comedy is delicately and carefully written, but its utter want of action will prevent its ever becoming a standard play. It is a pity that Madame Sand will persist in making her heroines such strong-minded women; *par conséquent*, her heroes so weak-minded. The character of Marguerite is certainly one to admire, but the commiseration that one has for the good-hearted, but weak-minded husband, takes away from the general good effect that the play woud otherwise create. Madame Rose Chéri plays the principal

character with great spirit, and is, undoubtedly, one of the very best *comediennes* on the French stage. M. Dupuis, the favourite comedian of this theatre, has a *rôle* which is totally unworthy his well known ability. The other theatres have nothing new; the "Bouffes Parisiens," the troupe of comedians who were so well received in London a couple of seasons ago, are giving the 200th representation of "Orphée aux Enfers." The theatre is so very small that this is not at all surprising, though the extravagant prices for seats must make it a good thing for the manager.

The furnished lodging-house keepers are now in the greatest glee. They imagine that the war in Italy will prevent all people of fortune who usually visit the "sunny clime" at this season of the year, carrying out their intention, and that they will come to Paris instead. They may not be mistaken. I hope they are not. I have often wondered at Fashion's strange freaks. Just at the time when Paris is most beautiful, most green, most inviting, Fashion's votaries are off to some disagreeable sunny watering-place, making themselves as uncomfortable as possible in small dark rooms in that most unpleasant of all places—a French hotel.

To-day being the anniversary of the death of Napoleon, numbers of the "Old Guard" may be seen, in their peculiar uniform, dating back to the time of the First Empire, surrounding the column in the Place Vendome, and leaving each his little crown of immortelles as his tribute of respect to the memory of their great leader.

LETTER II.

Departure of the Emperor for the Seat of War—The Opera, Tamberlik's famous C sharp—The Race-Course—The Old Woman and the New Loan—How France treats her "best sons"—The Princess Clotilde—The Little Prince being Photographed—The Moon taking an Evening Walk in the Tuileries Gardens—A Famous Songstress—The Exhibition—The English Clown.

Paris, Saturday, May 14, 1859.

The departure of the Emperor for Italy took place yesterday at six o'clock in the afternoon. As early as three all the streets from the Palace to the Lyons Railway terminus were lined with people anxious to get a view of their Sovereign before he left them for the seat of war. Owing to the kindness of a friend at Court our party was allowed to enter the Dépôt, and we consequently had an excellent view of their Majesties as they arrived, alighted, and entered the building, as well as their reception by the railway officials and their entrance into the carriages. The railway terminus was beautifully fitted up with flags and gold shields bearing the Imperial arms, and the ordinary waiting-room was arranged in a most tasteful and charming manner. We were obliged to leave our carriage before arriving at the Dépôt, as the streets and squares were so blocked up with people that to penetrate the living mass was an impossibility. At half-past five the Emperor and (contrary to expectation) the Empress arrived. Her Majesty had resolved to go as far as Montereau with the Emperor, dine there, and return in the evening at ten o'clock. She was accompanied by her ladies of honour, who were to return with her. The Princess Clotilde came to take

leave of her Imperial consort, as also of the Emperor and Empress, but she left almost immediately, accompanied by the Prince Jerome. The Empress seemed very much affected—tears coursed their way unrestrainedly down her cheeks, and the efforts of the Emperor to cheer her seemed but to make her more inconsolable. As the Imperial train left, loud cries of "Vive l'Empereur!" "Vive l'Impératrice!" from the people greeted one's ears and mingled with the martial strains of the regimental band outside. The scene altogether was a sad one—the Empress's were not the only tears that flowed. Many a sad wife gazed on her husband's retreating form—that husband who was going to the battle-field, never perhaps to see the loved wife again. It is useless to dwell on these things, but it is astonishing how we lose our nationality, and become, as we should, like sister and sister, when we see our fellow-beings under the influence of great sorrow. I am sure we sympathised with all our hearts with our weeping neighbour; it never once occurred to us that she was French—a thing that might have presented itself to our minds had we seen her laughing immoderately, a fault which French ladies unfortunately have. But to-day all was changed, and it was proved that they have as much sentiment as people of other nations. It is said that the Empress was exceedingly anxious to go with the Emperor, and had it not been that her duties as Regent retained her in Paris, she would certainly have yielded to her desires.

In spite of the war and the departure of the Emperor, Paris continues as gay as ever. The "Italiens," though the "positively last night" was announced a fortnight ago, still keeps on with Madame Penco and Tamberlik on Ristori's off-nights. Last Friday the Empress, the Princess Clotilde, and Prince Napoleon honoured with their presence the last per-

formance of *Poliuto*. The house was crowded to excess, and the opera was received with screams of applause; the well-known coldness of the audience of the Italiens renders this circumstance doubly flattering to the artists. After *Poliuto*, Tamberlik and Corsi sang the "duo" from *Otello*, in which Tamberlik gives his famous C sharp. He was compelled to repeat this wonderfully high note three times for the enraptured Parisians, and flowers and wreaths of laurel, decorated with ribbons, were thrown to the smiling performer, who bowed his thanks, first to the Imperial box, and then to the auditory. The Imperial party seemed greatly pleased at the performance, often during the evening giving the signal for applause.

The last running of the spring meeting came off last Sunday (don't be shocked, dear reader, it's always Sunday that they choose for the racing-day in Paris) at the Bois de Boulogne. The Emperor and Empress were present at it. The stands were crowded to excess, and even the reserved space in front of them was occupied by ladies. Within the ropes there was a large number of carriages and horsemen. Count de Morny, the Minister of State, the Minister of Agriculture and Commerce, the Prefect of the Seine, the Prefect of Police, and Marshal Magnan were present to meet the Emperor, nearly all of them in uniform. The running for the Emperor's Stakes was very good, and was won by Madame Letache de Fay's *Bièvre*.

We have had several "premières representations" at the different theatres, but the pieces given have really been so poor that they are not worth noticing. In fact, I suppose the managers think it unnecessary to go to the trouble to find good pieces, as their theatres are always full, let the play be ever so bad. The Parisian is a theatre-going biped: take

from him any amusement but that, and he grumbles not, but the theatre must be visited at all hazards.

It has been thought as good as a play to see the crowds of persons who daily assemble at the different places appointed for receiving the subscription to the new loan of 500,000,000f. It is said that at one place alone, the "Crédit Foncier," the subscriptions will quite cover the desired sum. It is amusing to see old women, who have bought ten francs' worth of *Rente*, walk away with the proud bearing of persons who have benefited their country: they each and all think that they are aiding the cause of Italy by the ten francs they have disbursed. Accounts from the provinces state that, as in Paris, the eagerness to take part in the loan is greater than on any similar occasion. The English journals who persisted in saying that the French nation was bankrupt, must now own their error in seeing this unmistakeable proof to the contrary.

The Lamartine subscription has been closed by the express desire of M. de Lamartine. In a letter to the President of the Subscription Fund, the offended poet declares that his knowledge of his devotion to France will suffice him; that his country has not responded to his call, and he thoroughly despises it in consequence. It is to be regretted that a person of such undeniable talent as M. de Lamartine should have acted in the untoward manner that he has done during the whole of this "subscription" affair. His reiteration of a determination to leave a country which has treated so ungratefully one of her "best sons" (to use his own expression), and his never carrying his determination into effect, has made his name a perfect jest in France at the present time. One is surprised that a poet who made his hero in "Jocelyn" resign his fortune in such a magnanimous manner should be himself so little imbued with the same spirit.

The Princess Clotilde will soon be in the enjoyment of a balcony which will enable her to have a fine view in various directions over Paris. Workmen are now busily engaged in erecting it for her Imperial Highness; when finished it will be covered and will extend to the Galerie d'Orleans, in the Palais Royal, communicating with Prince Napoleon's apartments.

A large crowd assembled yesterday on the Boulevard des Italiens, to get a peep at the little Prince as he entered the photographic establishment of Disderi and Co. His little Highness was going to have his portrait taken, in all probability to be given to the Emperor to take away with him. He is a sweet child; and, although not yet four years old, one would almost imagine that he knew already who he is, so dignified is his bearing and so chary is he of his smiles.

An imperial decree published yesterday in the *Moniteur*, the official journal, confers the Regency on the Empress during his Majesty's absence; another decree confers on Prince Jerome, in the absence of the Empress Regent, the presidentship of the Privy Council and of the Council of Ministers; and a further decree orders that a statue to the memory of the late Baron de Humboldt shall be placed in the gallery of the Palace of Versailles.

A new system of lighting by electricity was tried last Saturday in the principal "allée" of the garden of the Tuileries. The brilliancy was so great that persons standing on the Place de la Concorde could readily read the inscription of the Obelisk, while those near the apparatus looked as if their sombre vestments were suddenly changed to the purest white. It was amusing to see the astonishment of the promenaders in the Champs Elysée, who could not account for the extraordinary brilliancy in the garden, and who all seemed

to concur in the opinion that it was some peculiar freak of the moon. It would have been, indeed, peculiar to have seen her silver ladyship walking about in the avenues of the Tuileries.

This evening, at the Grand Hotel Du Louvre, Madame Guerrabella, the well-known songstress, gives her first concert. Madame Guerrabella is an American lady of great beauty and talent, and was attached to the Italian Opera last season. Her first appearance was a very successful one, and proved that her voice was as rich in quality as her face is in beauty. Madame Guerrabella is assisted by Madame Ristori and other artists of talent. I believe she contemplates visiting London, when you will have an opportunity of testing the truth of my remarks.

The Exhibition is still daily crowded to excess. The artists whose pictures are badly placed are looking forward anxiously for the end of the six weeks, at which time an entire re-arrangement is to take place; but those who are now pleased with the places allotted their pictures are of course as unhappy as possible. But they should be generous enough not to grumble, as they have had the field so long to themselves.

The *Figaro* of to-day gives a short biography of Boswell, the English clown, who has been for the last three years the pet of the circus-going community of Paris. He died on the 1st of May of an attack of apoplexy. He was deeply regretted by his fellow-riders and clowns, and has perhaps done more to make the English liked in Paris than many an individual occupying a much higher sphere of action.

LETTER III.

Immense success of the New Loan—Parisian enthusiasm on the War Question—Extortionate Newsvendors—The Exhibition of Paintings—Crinoline at a Discount—Theatrical Gossip—"Man is a Fickle Creature"—The Lamartine Fund—Flowers *v.* Laurels—The Empress Regent.

Paris, Wednesday, May 18, 1859.

THE greatest and most important news I can communicate to-day is the sum which has been realized at the different bureaus, and which constitutes the "new loan of 500 millions." The great desire which has been manifested by all classes to subscribe, proves more than the most eloquent words the patriotism and the wealth of France. The daily papers are now repeating in mocking terms the advice of the *Times* to English capitalists, when that journal so strongly recommended them not to take part in the loan. The *Patrie* of last evening thinks that it was "not very *apropos* in the *Morning Herald* to speak so ill of the French finances the very day before the *Moniteur* was to announce to France and to Europe the enormous figure of the national loan." It certainly shows that the French people did not take the advice of the *Times*, as the Emperor had only asked for 500 millions, and the result is 2,500 millions—five times the amount demanded. It was a strange sight, the long line of human beings who crowded the streets in all directions near the subscribing bureaus; the most singular of all was to see them lie quietly down on the pavement as soon as night came on and wait their turn, which, to the last comers, seldom arrived before morning.

That the war is a popular one in France, there can be no

doubt. Since the departure of the Emperor, the Empress anxiously awaited daily at the gates of the Palace, by crowd of her subjects, desirous of testifying to her Majesty the interest and affectionate respect they bear her. It appears the the Imperial progress to the seat of war has been as great an ovation as that from the Tuileries to the Lyons Railway Terminus. All the "Pictorials" of the week—the *Monde Illustré L'Illustration*, &c. have cuts representing the scene in the Place de la Bastille, when the working people attempted to unharness the horses in his Majesty's carriage and substitute themselves to drag him to the station. In truth, any foreigner could not but have been struck at the manifestations of loyalty displayed upon this occurrence. Shouts of "I will touch him!" "God bless the benefactor of his people!" "We'll take care of your wife and child!" were to be heard on all sides; and the streaming eyes of the Empress, and evident emotion of the Emperor, showed how deeply the Imperial husband and wife were moved at the exciting scene. I will not speak of the advices from the seat of war—in fact, they are unimportant, as no engagement has as yet taken place. It is evident that the Paris public is wrought up to the highest pitch of excitement, as the little newspaper boxes, or kiosks, on the Boulevards are daily (and nightly) crowded with anxious buyers. You go for your afternoon walk, and happy are you if you are not most unceremoniously jostled at at every turn by a "Monsieur" who, lost in the depths of the *Patrie*, is walking on unconscious of everything that passes around him; the customary "Pardon Madame," is quite forgotten, and on strides the news-seeking gentleman to his home.

I intended to speak, in my last letter, of a species of extortion practised by the Paris newsvendors since the news

of the war has been about. The ordinary price of the *Patrie*, *Pays*, and *Presse* is three sous, but now that the papers have really something of interest in them, the unscrupulous *marchands* ask five, six, and even seven sous. It is rather hard to buy these journals all the year round when they have no earthly news or interest in them, and then as soon as they have, because of existing circumstances, something that would really make one desire to read them, the price is augmented. I perceive that yesterday they had come down to the usual price, which was probabiy caused by the fact that the papers in question had warned the public against encouraging these people, and begging the buyers to come to the office of the journals, where copies might be had at the usual price.

The Exhibition of Fine Arts, after having been open the specified six weeks, has now closed its doors for an entire rehanging and re-arrangement of the pictures and statues. One large painting will be admitted, as was the understanding at the opening of the Exhibition. This picture, which is called the "Courtine de Malakoff," by M. Yvon, will be, I suppose, another of the immense battle scenes which this artist is so fond of painting. One would think that if "practice makes perfect," M. Yvon must certainly be perfect in painting scenes from the Crimean war. The one now on exhibition, entitled "La Gorge de Malakoff," and the one about to be received, were ordered by the Emperor for the Gallery of Versailles. It is generally supposed that M. Yvon will be the recipient of the gold medal awarded by the Jury of the Exhibition. It was he who carried off that prize two years ago.

The extremely unpleasant rainy weather has retarded the spring fashions, which were beginning to bud so beautifully with the opening flowers at the commencement of the month. The rain keeps pattering down incessantly, and the Champs

Elysées and Bois de Boulogne look quite deserted. Of course those ladies who do venture out are all dressed in the convenient black, which toilette French ladies always have *en réserve* for just such weather as the present. I see that many of these oracles (as far as fashion goes) are having their crape or China shawls dyed black, and trimmed with two rows (or even one) of lace, which makes them have quite the same effect as the garment that "Dienlafait," and other of our noted shops are selling for 300 francs. So if any of my readers have these shawls, let them be taken to the dyers immediately, for it is considered very *mauvais genre* to wear the shawl in its original color (white) at present. A sprinkling of jet beads with the embroidery gives a rich effect. In the absence of lace, deep fringe may be used, but the fringe of the shawl itself looks poor and thin after dying. The rage for gored skirts still continues, and many of the leaders of fashion are making their appearance (whenever the weather will allow them) *sans* crinoline. I need not say that these ladies were the first to adopt the above much-abused article of ladies' apparel, and are now the first to leave it off—and leave it off in the fullest sense of the expression—without even the stiffened *jupons* which were used before the advent of crinoline. Perhaps it was because the ladies were particularly graceful, perhaps for the novelty of the thing; but I must confess (albeit a crinoline wearer) that the heavy folds of the robe which fell naturally as the lady walked, quite made me think that the crinoline was not such an improvement after all. Be this as it may, I observe that her Majesty the Empress Regent still clings to the crinoline, and no one will deny her having a graceful appearance. Bonnets are being made more and more simple. Those of straw or horse-hair are very pretty, trimmed with a black silk curtain, red and black poppies on one



side, and black strings, with the "Empress wreath," which goes across the top of the inside cap, made of small red and black poppies. English ladies coming to Paris are astonished at the quantity of black used by the French ladies in almost every article of their dress, and still more astonished at its not giving them a sombre-looking toilette. It is because all the other colours in the dress or bonnet are so very brilliant that the black merely has the effect of softening them down. Black is a very becoming colour, and might be successfully introduced by the London milliners. A new colour, called the "*Mauve Impératrice,*" which is not quite a violet, but something between the lilac and the violet, has been introduced by the ribbon merchants, and is now extending to dresses. It is a beautiful colour; but to those of my readers who are in the habit of putting on their dresses or bonnets more than once or twice, I would recommend a more durable shade, as it fades dreadfully.

Theatricals are flourishing (when are they not in Paris?) In fact, the bad weather keeps people away from the fashionable and respectable garden, the Pré Catalan, and, of course, from the gardens of a lower grade as well; and as the Parisian must have pleasure, he flies to the theatre, his favourite winter resort. We have had two new comic operas produced within the past week—one at the Opera Comique, to play on the off-nights of the *Pardon de Ploërmel;* and the other at the Lyrique, with Madame Ugalde as the heroine. They are about up to the standard of French comic operas, and do not deserve more than a passing notice. A new comedy in verse, called *Souvent Homme Varie* (a liberal translation of which is "Man is a fickle creature"), has been produced at the Français, and has had a fair success. In fact, the comedians of the Français are so perfect in every particular—

dress, action, words, and all that is required for the stage, that the poorest piece is made mediocre, and those mediocre seem to be *chef d'œuvres*. I could be very eulogistic as regards the attention to small characters, the little nothings that make up the whole of the Français; but it suddenly occurs to me that perhaps I am not the first, and certainly not the most able, writer who has been struck by this. So I refrain, with only a word of advice to young actors and actresses of all countries—Go and take a lesson at the Français. I see that Madame Miolan Carvalho is about to make her first appearance in your good city; you will have an opportunity of hearing a most exquisite singer—a voice which possesses all the flexibility which characterises that of Miss Louisa Pyne, and at the same time finer and more delicate, if possible; for that queen of English song has a great admirer in the person of your humble correspondent. Madame Ferraris, the great *danseuse*, makes her re-appearance this evening on the boards of the Grand Opera, in the ballet of *Sacountala*. She is a great favourite with the theatre going community, though I fear (for her sake) that Miss Emma Livry, the *furore* of this winter, has eclipsed her in the Terpsichorean art.

The report of the definitive closing of the Lamartine Fund is contradicted in to-day's *Presse*. The only thing that could have given rise to the idea, says that journal, is that "to avoid the expense of rent, paying officials, &c., M. Lamartine will receive subscriptions himself at his own house in the Rue de la Ville l'Eveque." Some of the papers said that the unfortunate poet had realised the sum of 400,000 francs by the appeal to the public, but this, it appears, is not true.

Many *bons mots* are being recounted by the relatives of officers who are now gone to Italy, as having occurred to

them on the way. I repeat to you the following: As a regiment was passing through Nice, some young, and of course, beautiful ladies (it would destroy the romance of the thing if they were not beautifnl), were throwing bouquets of flowers down upon the heads of the retreating officers. "Thanks, thanks," replied one of these last, "thanks for your beautiful flowers, when we come back we'll bring you laurels in return." I have repeated this anecdote merely to show you that the above-mentioned gentleman had a good opinion of himself and took care to make it known. Joking apart, this certainty of success is often the very thing that makes success. The French soldier is a good one; he knows it; he tells it; he boasts of it; and, of course, when put to the test he cannot prove himself unworthy of the good name he has been giving himself. The officer who said to the young ladies that he would bring back laurels to them, will remember that remark on the battle-field and try and redeem his promise. I may mention here that the troops who are leaving for Italy are ordered to leave their great coats behind, as it is supposed that they will not be necessary, and it relieves the men of a great weight.

Since the departure of the Emperor all decrees are submitted to the Empress. It may interest your readers to know the form of signature adopted by her Majesty in her capacity of Empress-Regent. She signs thus:—

"Pour l'Empereur,
"Et en vertu des pouvoirs qu'il nous a conférés,
Signé EUGENIE."

This is countersigned by the Minister as follows:—

"Par l'Impératrice Régente,
Le Ministre," &c.

Decrees and formal acts are drawn out in the following terms:—

"EUGENIE, Impératrice des Français, Régente de l'Empire, par délégation de sa Majesté Napoléon III., Empereur des Français par la grâce de Dieu et la volonté nationale," &c., &c.

LETTER IV.

Present aspect of Paris—Characteristics of the Frenchman—The War News—Why do English Artists not paint for the Paris Exhibition?—Movements of the Court—Coldness between the Empress and Princess Clotilde—Spread of Protestantism in France—A "Scene" in the Opera Comique—The French "Derby"—The Summer Fashions.

Paris, Wednesday, May 25, 1859.

Now that the great body of troops ordered off to Italy has left, Paris has resumed its old aspect. War is blowing her brazen trumpets at but a short distance from France's frontiers; the belligerent forces are, in fact, face to face, scarcely a family can be found which has not some one of its dearest members at the scene of action; and yet, in appearance, at least, everything is going on in Paris as if nothing had occured. The Frenchman goes to his business, to his pleasures, with a tranquillity which is not affected. There is still the greatest activity at the Bourse; the *allées* of the Bois de Boulogne are still crowded with the same promenaders; the theatres are filled to overflowing. One would almost be induced to think that the Parisians were quite ignorant of what was taking place in Italy—all is calm, but this calm is not indifference; for let it but be reported on the Boulevard

that startling news has arrived from Piedmont, and the strolling and *nonchalant* gentlemen, who is smoking his afternoon cigar in the crowded thoroughfare, appearing to be lost in admiration of the already green trees, the charms of his before dinner "absinthe" or the pleasures of a gay evening, after a fatiguing day, will precipitate himself towards one of the news-venders' stalls, hastily purchase the *Journal du soir* and eagerly search for the desired information; he is no longer the same man; strange contrast! It is but among Parisians that one can see such variability of character; in the midst of events which are of the greatest moment to them they are still faithful to their old habits; they pass from the most lively emotion to the most complete stoicism, in a space of time almost incredible for its shortness. But with all this, the war is undoubtedly the subject of all conversations. It is true one may still find persons who, in spite of the great question, speak of music, the fine arts, sciences, or "belles lettres," but unconsciously even these common-places lead to the all engrossing topic—the war.

Yesterday morning's *Moniteur* publishes the official report of General Forey on the combat of Montebello. The French seem very proud of this victory which, it is said, was gained by 6,000 of them, over 15,000 Austrians. The loss on the Austrian side is estimated by the French at 2,000 killed and wounded, while their adversaries report but between 600 or 700 from their ranks. The conduct of the Piedmontese cavalry on the occasion of this battle is highly extolled. Prince Napoleon has issued a proclamation on board the Reine Hortense, to the inhabitants of Tuscany, in which he repeats to them that the "only object that France, satisfied with her present greatness, had, was to know that there was a friendly people at her frontiers who would owe their regeneration to the



by her hands, and remained hanging in this perilous position for several moments. Many persons attempted to pull her back, but were unable, and it was evident that her strength was failing her, and that she most soon fall, when a powerful man came forward, and succeeded in dragging her back. I need not say that this circumstance was of so horrible a nature, that although the performance went on as if nothing had happened, many persons left the theatre, and those who remained were not in the vein to enjoy an amusing play. Next Saturday a magnificent and varied performance will be given at the grand Opera, for the benefit of the retired *artistes* and *employés* of this theatre. The bill presents all the well-known names in the singing world, while Mesdames Rosati, Ferraris, and Emma Livry will dance in the *divertissement*.

The French "Derby" took place last Sunday, at Chantilly, and was brilliantly attended. The winning horse, Black Prince, was the property of the Count de la Grange. The giving of these and other sports on Sunday prevents the English and American residents from participating in them.

Yesterday the "Société du sport Nautique" gave their annual regatta at Argenteuil for yachts under ten tons. A stong breeze from the north-west favoured the race. Sixteen boats started and after a spirited contest, which lasted several hours, the Ariel, belonging to Mr. John Arthur, well-known in Paris as a house agent, won the cup and gold medal of honour. The Ariel was built by Messrs. Ratsey and Sons, of West Cowes. Mr. John Arthur was also the winner of the same race last year. On the name of the victorious yacht being pronounced, all his numerous friends crowded round Mr. Arthur to congratulate him on the success of his beautiful little Ariel.

The splendid weather we have had for the last week, has



brought out the fine *toilettes*, so long retarded by the rain which fell so constantly during the early part of the month. One of the latest novelties in the way of ladies' dress is the *voilette Clotilde*, which is extremely pretty, and will certainly be very fashionable. This graceful little ornament for the bonnet forms a veil in front and a sort of lace curtain which falls over one of silk behind. It is made of lace blonde, and is usually white with black spots. A very pretty one may be had, at any of the fine *merceries*, for ten francs. It is certainly economical, for with *la voilette Clotilde* the bonnet requires very little other trimming. The Empress is taking advantage of the fine weather to appear in her favourite colour, the *mauve* or lilac. This afternoon her Majesty wore a dress of this delicate shade, with bonnet to match; a large shawl of Chantilly lace with two deep flounces of the same, completed the most exquisite carriage toilette. I observed that her Majesty has now positively adopted the shape (for bonnet) that our best milliners tried so hard to induce last winter. This bonnet, which is of course christened the "*chapeau Impératrice*," is bent in at the sides so as almost to touch the cheeks; while at the top of the head it is made as wide as it possibly can in proportion to the size of the wearer's face. It is extremely becoming to the Empress, although, with her large *coiffure*, at a short distance it makes her head look too large for her shoulders. An inverted triangle is a perfect representation of the front view of this bonnet. On seeing this *chapeau* one is forcibly reminded of those queer toys that we all have played with, which were made in the shape of a woman, who was no sooner set down on her feet than she immediately turned over on her head,—which acrobatic feat was caused by some weight having been placed in that essential portion of her body to force her to make the



summersault intended to amuse the juvenile and admiring purchasers. In a few words, then, one almost expects the ladies wearing the new *chapeau* to turn quickly over on their heads, to the unqualified astonishment of all beholders. The *ruche à la vieille* having quite gone out, we have now instead the *ruche contraire*, which consists in the folds of the upper portion of the *ruche* being turned one way, while those of the lower portion are turned in the contrary direction. This *ruche* has a very pleasing effect, and is less likely to catch the dust than the *ruche à la vieille*. In spite of the continued efforts of the dressmakers to prevent it, the tight sleeve will certainly reign supreme after the summer months are past; even now, all dresses of dark material, such as black or brown silk, satin, or *moire antique*, are made with the old-fashioned sleeve, quite tight to the arm, and buttoned round the wrist. The sleeve is in some cases terminated by a large linen cuff, which turns back, and in others by a small goffered ruffle, which falls on the gloved hand. Of course this sleeve will only be adopted for walking dress, as *la manche pagode*, with lace undersleeve, will always be the *mode* for dinners and small *soirées*. The dressmakers object to this sleeve, because of the absence of all trimming; in buying this last they always have their profit, and will not make a dress for which the trimming is brought to them. The tight sleeve requires a cap or jockey at the top, which should be well trimmed to give an air of richness to the long sleeve, which has no *garniture*. Long pointed bodies still hold their own, though the Empress's dressmakers and others have sent out several dresses with belts; but these do not seem to take so well, the French ladies not considering them *gracieux*. Large white muslin shawls, with two deep ruffles of the same, are much in vogue when the weather permits.



We have certainly the most changeable climate possible; when I began my letter the sun was shining brightly, the birds singing, the air balmy and spring-like, and now, as I close, the sky has become overcast, the rain is falling fast, and the joyous promenaders have all vanished; in fact, as I looked out of my window upon the deserted steeet—usually one of the most frequented—I could almost fancy that instead of nearly the end of May, we are still in the middle of that bleak month, which Hood so poetically describes, and which we all wish past, "No—vember."

LETTER V.

The War—The Parisian Newspaper Press—Re-opening of the English Church in Paris—The French Clergy and the War—Paris Amusements—The Princess Clotilde—A Hint for English Lady Visitors to Paris—The New Rose, "La Montebello"—Ascension Day.

Paris, Wednesday, June 1, 1859.

A REPORT was prevalent in Paris last evening, that a general engagement had taken place yesterday morning at the seat of war, along nearly the whole line; and that the right wing of the Austrians had been obliged to give way. You can fancy with what eagerness the *Moniteur* was bought and scanned this morning for confirmation of this report, but the following is the only thing that would seem to have given rise to the rumour:—

"Verceil, 31 mai, 5 h. 30 m. soir.

Les Autrichiens, en grand nombre, ont attaque ce matin avec énergie le roi de Sardaigne, et ont tâché d'empêcher nos



troupes de passer la rivière, mais les Sardes ont repoussé vaillamment les Autrichiens; ils ont été soutenus par la division Trochu, qui a été peu engagée.

"Le 3 zouaves, qui avait été attaché à une division Sarde, a fait merveille, seul en face d'une batterie de huit pièces et d'un feu nourri d'infanterie. Il a franchi un canal, gravi une pente très-roide, chargé les Autrichiens à la baïonnette, jeté dans le canal plus de 400 ennemis et emporté six canons. Les troupes Sardes ont aussi enlevé deux canons.

"Nos pertes sont peu considérables."

No doubt the evening papers will contain further particulars of this affair, but the late hour at which they appear renders it impossible to read their contents and give the purport of it to your readers in time for the post. The official journal of this morning contains a list of names of Sardinian officers who distinguished themselves at the combat of Montebello, and to whom his Majesty has given the Cross of the Legion of Honour. General de Sonnaz has received the grade of Commander in that Order, and General Forey (French) has been raised to the dignity of Grand Cross, while the military medal has been conferred on a large number of privates who took part in the battle of the 21st May, and several have been promoted.

The head-quarters of the Emperor are removed from Alessandria. His Majesty, before leaving that place, is said to have visited the grand divisional hospital, in which are lying the wounded of Montebello. The telegram received by the French Government says that Austrians, French, and Piedmontese are all mixed together in the different wards, and all receive the same kindness and attention. The Emperor assured the Austrian colonel who was taken prisoner and is

wounded that as soon as he was able to be removed he should be sent back to his country in safety. This stroke of policy on the part of the French sovereign is said to have greatly touched the Austrian prisoners, who little expected from him such magnanimity; and, it is added, they are forced to acknowledge that if the Allies have a generous ruler, they, on the other hand, have a noble enemy.

The *Illustration* is giving a series of very spirited engravings sketched at the seat of war. It appears they have sent an artist there who follows the troops, wears a sort of uniform, and sketches every point of interest. This is a piece of enterprise quite unheard of in the Paris newspaper world; as the inactivity as regards obtaining information on any interesting matter for their columns is proverbial. They do not seem to understand the art of editing as practised in England and America, and I greatly fear that the want of generosity in paying their contributors is the real reason of the poorness of their articles. I have heard it asserted by French literary people that the English newspaper proprietors must certainly be mad to give such liberal pay. I tried to assure them that in this consisted the superiority of our journals, that good articles brought many readers, and that in the end it was real economy; but all to no purpose, they prefer issuing their papers without any earthly news in them, having their subscribers and buyers dissatisfied, and relying upon chance or the curiosity of the public for the sale of the next day's paper. There are persons here who really imagine that the great London daily papers are kept up (for the most part) by some generous individuals who will not see them stopped, out of national pride in the immensity of their sheets!

The English Church, in the Rue d'Aguesseau, was re-

seemed particularly to attract the attention of her Imperial Highness.

I should like to give a bit of advice to English ladies coming to Paris for the first time, and at the risk of being *indiscrète* I venture. Full-dress is not worn at any of the places of amusement in Paris, except at the Grand Opera and the Italiens. Even at the Français and the Opera Comique bonnets and high-necked dresses should be worn. It pains me to see a party of English ladies and gentlemen entering a theatre in *grande toilette* when every one else is not só dressed, and to hear the French around me ridiculing the want of *savoir-vivre* of the English; they (the French) do not know or remember that it is the custom in England, and that *their* going to Mr. Kean's or the Haymarket in bonnet and shawl would be considered in England quite as *mauvais genre* as over-dress is here. The Empress herself and all the princesses of the Imperial Family (Mathilde, Clotilde, Bachiocci, &c.) always wear their bonnets at all theatres except the two I have mentioned above. These hints are offered in the best possible spirit, and I hope they will be received in the same manner.

At the Horticultural Show, last week, the Empress was begged to name a new species of rose. Her Majesty called it "La Montebello," and I observed that yesterday she had the exact counterpart of it in her bonnet.

It is said that her Majesty receives a telegraphic despatch from the Emperor *every hour* in the day!

A Council of Ministers was held yesterday at the Tuileries, the Empress presiding. Prince Jerome was present. Her Majesty returned to the Palace of St. Cloud in the afternoon.

To-morrow being Ascension Day, high mass will be celebrated in all the Catholic churches. There will also be full

service in the Protestant churches. As usual, in the afternoon the Circuses and several of the minor theatres will give performances. These places of amusement are invariably crowded on fête days.

LETTER VI.

The Battle of Magenta—Rejoicings in Paris—The Service at Notre Dame—Collection of Linen for the Wounded—The Regatta: Success of English Oarsmen—The "Fêtes Patronales"—A Street Combat—Paris Theatricals.

Paris, Wednesday, June 8, 1859.

Since the tidings of the battle of Magenta were communicated to the Parisians by the publication of the Emperor's telegram to the Empress, the always gay French capital has been doubly gay—illuminations every night, flags flying and bands playing every day. Last Sunday, the day on which the news was received, the Empress, accompanied by the Princess Clotilde, drove about the principal streets till nearly midnight, receiving the acclamations of the people, which only equalled in enthusiasm those which greeted the Imperial couple as they proceeded to the Lyons railway terminus on the 10th of May last, the day that the Emperor quitted Paris for the seat of war. Yesterday a solemn *Te Deum* of thanks for the late success of the French army was chanted in the cathedral of Notre Dame. At half-past twelve, a salute of twenty-one guns from the Hotel des Invalides announced that the Empress Regent had arrived from St. Cloud, and was leaving the Tuileries to be present at the ceremony. For hours before, the streets leading to the cathedral and through which her

Majesty was to pass, were lined with a throng of spectators, who, anxious to testify to their Sovereign their joy at the victory, were heedless of the lowering appearance of the sky, which portended at every moment a heavy storm which eventually came forth in all its fury shortly after the procession set out. The appearance of the Imperial *cortége* was the signal for the burst of enthusiasm which had been pent up for hours. Shouts, cheers, cries of admiration of the Emperor and his Consort, not forgetting the usual tribute of respect to the "*petit Empereur*" (as they call the little Prince Impérial), were to be heard on all sides, and the evident emotion of the Empress was contagious. One old market-woman I observed particularly, whom I should think, from her appearance, was "all unused to the melting mood," busily engaged in wiping the falling drops from her tear-dimmed eyes, at the same time assuring her neighbours that he (the Emperor) was a greater man than his uncle, and that his uncle was next to a saint. I being one of the neighbours, fully coincided, as far as appearance goes, with my carrot-and-turnip-vending friend, and for my affability she allowed me to place myself in front of her, and I thus had an excellent view of the whole affair. The Empress was accompanied by Prince Jérome and the Princesses Clotilde and Mathilde. The grand officers of the Crown, the Grand Master and Mistress of the Empress's Household, the officers and ladies on service of their Majesties and Imperial Highnesses, and Prince Lucien Murat, preceded her Majesty. The cathedral itself presented all the appearance of being decked for a *fête*—flowers and flags streaming from all the towers and peristyles of the ancient building. Inside it was even more gorgeously arranged; the pillars in the centre aisle being hung with rich velvet, embroidered with gold; right and left were six rows of



benches for the *grand corps d'etat*. Immediately in front of the grand altar, and under a rich canopy of velvet and gold hangings, were placed the arm-chair of the Empress and her *prie-dieu*, or kneeling chair. At the right and left of this, eight chairs and stools were placed for the Prince Jérome, Princess Clotilde, Princess Mathilde, and the other members of the Imperial family. The grand altar was decorated with velvet, gold fringe and lace, while from the ceiling of the church were suspended innumerable chandeliers, whose green, red, and yellow lamps threw "a dim religious light" over the kneeling congregation. The church was full, but through the kindness of one of the officials (they are ever ready to oblige foreigners), we found, if not seats, at least standing room. The *Te Deum* was chanted with great pomp, and was extremely imposing. The booming of the cannons fired from the Invalides was drowned by the roaring of the thunder and the noise of the pelting rain, which continued to pour forth in most merciless style, and mingled with the voices of the assembly as it offered up thanks, and the low hum of the many voices outside who preferred braving the relentless storm to losing their view of the Empress as she took her departure. This violent storm, as I have seen it expressed, might have caused a poet to fancy that Heaven itself exhibited its anger at the folly and wickedness of mankind, and also its sorrow at the carnage on the banks of the Ticino. The ceremony over, her Majesty left; shortly after which the rain ceased. The air was considerably freshened; the sky, which when she entered was black and threatening, was now as blue and tranquil as if no storm had ever crossed its lovely vastness. I heard it gravely asserted by some men in blouses behind our party, that the sudden change in the weather was a sign that the *bon Dieu* approved of the act of devotion

which had just taken place. The Garde Nationale formed a *haie* from the cathedral to the palace, and I observed that every bayonet was decorated with a bouquet of roses at the top. The Empress wore a violet silk dress, a bonnet of white crape ornamented with a violet feather, and a white Brussels lace shawl.

The *Moniteur* of this morning contains the nomination by the Emperor at head quarters of General de M'Mahon to the rank of Marshal of France, also bestowing on him the title of Duc de Magenta. General Regnault de St. Jean D'Angely has also been named Marshal of France.

An appeal to the public is being made in all the principal journals for gifts of old linen intended for the use of the wounded soldiers. The *Moniteur* announces, this morning, that gifts of this nature will be thankfully received at the hospitals, the twelve *mairies*, and at all the *bureaux de bienfaisance*, in Paris. This morning, there is quite a crowd of people, principally belonging to the working class, at each of these bureaux in my neighbourhood; and as the little package of linen is handed in, the donor walks away quietly and sadly, for he or she cannot be certain that their linen may not be applied to the gaping wound of their own son or brother. War and its consequences are dreadful, and in the midst of rejoicings at the victory, there is a tinge of sadness when one thinks how dearly that victory has been bought. The Empress has sent a letter of condolence to the widow of General Espinasse, formerly Minister of the Interior, who was killed in the battle of Magenta.

Last night, a piece of verse, in honour of the victory, was recited at the Comédie Française. At the Opéra Comique, a fine chorus appropriate to the occasion was also sung, and drew forth the loudest acclamations. According to accounts



from the provinces, every evening since the victory, the whole of France has been dressed out in flags, and the whole country is one blaze of illuminations, as in Paris.

The Spring Regatta given by the Régattes Parisiennes took place as announced at St. Cloud. "Great preparations had been made by the different crews in training, so as not to be beaten by the crews from Rouen, Havre, Nantes, &c. The whole honours of the day were carried off by the Eva, belonging to Mr. John Arthur, of Paris, with an English crew, the same men winning the first prizes in the sculling race, and the pair-oared, the four-oared, and the six-oared races. The unusual incident of one crew haviug rowed all the above races one after the other, and against first-rate pullers, some fresh in each race, drew from the spectators loud marks of approval." I copy the above from *Galignani;* a mistake as regards the date of the sport having prevented my being a witness of the success of Old England.

The small towns outside of Paris—Neuilly, St. Cloud, Auteuil, St. Germains, &c.—are having their annual patronal *fêtes*. These *fêtes* are queer things—a mass of deformed babies, dogs, and cows generally forming the chief attraction —while their frequenters being ambitious in the art of firing, many spend a large amount of pennies in trying to attain an unattainable target. The *fête* usually ends with a grand *feu d'artifice*, which always burns holes in somebody's gown, and invariably frightens children, who are led off ignominiously to be punished for their want of courage; so although the *fête patronale* presents no great attraction for the intellectual, it certainly benefits *restaurateurs*, &c., who augment the price of their huge loaves of bread, tough meat, &c., to their heart's content. Speaking of this bread reminds me of an amusing scene I saw enacted in the Faubourg St.

Honorê the other day. Two men, each carrying a loaf of this immensely long bread were passing each other in the crowded thoroughfare. Whether they jostled each other, I cannot say, not being near enough to hear; but whatever might have been the cause, they began a regular combat, their murderous weapons being their loaves of bread. Long and lustily they plied; the bread was tough, and did not break, and with the heat of the day waxed that of the combatants; thrust followed thrust, till the approach of the sergeant-de-ville seemed to give a fresh impetus to the tallest man, who, striking out boldly with his loaf, overturned the enemy and his bread into the rubbish which is now collected before the door of his Excellency Earl Cowley's Hotel, and fled, a victor amidst the shouts of the bystanders. Any one of my readers who is surprised at bread haviug been called the "staff of life," should come to Paris, and would there be convinced that it is long enough to be the staff of a giant.

The marriage of M. Faure, the well-known tenor of the Opéra Comique, with Mdlle. Lefébre of the same theatre, was celebrated last week at the principal church at Sèvres. The principal witness for the bridegroom was M. Meyerbeer, the composer, while the lady boasted of no less a personage than M. Mocquard, Private Secretary and chief of the Emperor's Cabinet, as her *témoin* (witness). The Opéra Comique is still giving the *Pardon de Ploërmel*, and in spite of the excessive heat it draws crowds. At the Lyrique, we are having the last representations of *Faust*, with Madame Miolan Carvalho as Marguerite, prior to her departure for London. Her voice is admirably suited to the *rôle* she is going to undertake in the *Pardon*, and I do not doubt she will become a favourite in the London musical world.



LETTER VII.

The War: Unfounded Rumours—The Empress-Regent—Enthusiasm of the French People on account of the War—French Courtesy to the Austrian Prisoners—Paris sad—Theatrical Gossip—The Fashions.

Paris, Wednesday, June 22, 1859.

The report was current in Paris last evening, that a great battle had taken place, and that the French had come off victorious. The *Moniteur* was, as usual, eagerly bought this morning by a crowd of news-seeking purchasers (your correspondent among the rest), but beyond a few unimportant decrees, signed by the Empress-Regent, and of two by the Emperor at head-quarters, containing promotions, the official organ has nothing of interest or importance. That a great struggle is near at hand—perhaps at this moment taking place—there can be no doubt, and it is but natural, under the circumstances, that many erroneous reports should be spread. The *Moniteur* has warned the Parisians not to place too much reliance on rumours not having received official confirmation, and the report of last evening not having obtained that confirmation, must consequently be unfounded.

A Council of Ministers, at which the Empress presided, was yesterday held at the Tuileries; the Council lasted from one o'clock till half-past five. The Empress was enthusiastically received on leaving the Palace, and along the Champs Elysées cries of "*Vive l'Empereur! Vive l'Impératrice-Régente!*" were heard. It was the general remark that her Majesty was looking pale and fatigued, though, as ever, smiling and gracious to those who greeted her.

The anxious desire of the people to in some manner show their enthusiasm and approval of the war and its stated object, viz., the freeing of the Italian people, is testified by the way in which they respond to each new appeal that is made to their generosity. For example, I have mentioned the asking for old linen for dressing the wounds of the soldiers; the scenes at the different *bureaux*, when the loan of 500,000,000f. was demanded, are now being repeated on a small scale. All day long the offices are crowded, and it has been asserted that the persons charged to receive these donations have more linen than they know what to do with. An amusing story is told of an old woman who, with her parcel of linen, on entering the principal office of the Central Administration of Hospitals was told that they had already more than they needed. "So much the better!" cried she, "if you have got more than is required for the French soldiers, give mine to the Austrians;" with which humane request she stalked away. By an Imperial decree in the *Moniteur*, a committee, under the presidency of the Empress-Regent, has been formed charged to centralise the sums offered in aid of the wounded and the families of the killed or wounded of the Army of Italy, and to direct the distribution of those donations. This committee, in addition to the Empress, is composed of the Princess Clotilde, Princess Mathilde, Countess Vaillant, Duchess de Malakoff, Countess Randon, Duchess de Magenta, Countess Regnaud de St. Jean d'Angely, Madame Parseval-Duchênes, Madame Hamelin, the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris, Count de Germiny, Governor of the Bank of France, Baron Barbier, Intendant of the First Military Division, and M. Davenne, Director of Public Assistance. The forming of this committee is well-timed, as persons who desired to contribute something more substantial than old linen were



prevented from doing so by not knowing whom to entrust with the sums they wished to give.

The Marseilles journals report the departure on the 20th inst. of 1,300 Austrian prisoners from that port. They were to be taken to Toulouse. They marched through the principal streets of the town, and to the great astonishment of the Marseilles population made the air ring, it is said, with cries of "*Vive l'Empereur!*" "*Vive la France!*" But supposing it were the case, it is not to be wondered at when one takes into consideration the extreme kindness and courtesy with which they, as well as all the Austrians taken prisoners by the French in this war, have been treated. Each Austrian officer is allowed to choose the place of residence that he prefers. They enjoy the same privilege in reduction of price on railways as French officers. Paris, which formerly was not allowed to be placed on the list of cities chosen as the residence of prisoners, is now open to them, and many superior Austrian officers, who, for the most part, belong to rich and noble families, are not not long in profiting by this favour, and choosing for their residence the gay capital. Every officer disembarking at Toulon or at Marseilles designates the city he has chosen, and signs an engagement not to leave it without authorisation, under pain of losing the advantages that his position as officer gives him, and being treated as a simple soldier. In fact, the French Government has done all in its power to render their captivity less irksome. They are entirely free on parole, and may leave the place on authorisation of the authorities. Those who are married may send for their wives, if they desire it. The following is the list of annual sums to be paid to officers of the different ranks:—General of division, 4,000f.; general of brigade, 3,600f.; superior officers 2,400f.; captain and lieutenant, 1,200f.



Common soldiers will receive a proportionate amount. The following incident is related by the principal journal in the town of Orleans, and I give it to you from its having struck me as being simple and touching: "The other day when the Austrian prisoners were entering our city, a great crowd had assembled on their passage, and all pushed and pressed forward to get a look at them. This curiosity, however, had nothing in it that was calculated to wound the feelings of the Austrian prisoners, as the French know how to sympathise with the suffering of a vanquished enemy; they feel but pity and commiseration for those that are fallen, and admire courage wherever it may be found. All at once a little boy, who had managed to get in front by scrambling between the legs of the taller persons, found himself face to face with the prisoners. The child looked at them attentively, after which he made a profound bow. A colonel who was at the head of the detachment, flattered by this remark of deference on the part of one so young, took the child up in his arms, and, addressing him in his best French said, 'Why did you bow to us, little one?' 'Because,' answered the child, 'my mother says you are very unhappy.' 'Alas! yes,' said the colonel, with tears in his eyes, 'and your mother is a noble woman to have taught you so to respect misfortune. Had I something to give you as a token of the pleasure you have afforded me, I would offer it to you; but I have nothing—will you let me kiss you?' The child lifted his rosy lips to the prisoner, who tenderly embraced him amid the emotion of the spectators of this simple and touching scene."

I said last week that Paris was dull. I now say more—it is sad. To one who knows the gay capital well, the melancholy look of all the principal streets and avenues is but too apparent. If there are still a few fine equipages which



roll silently along the Champs Eylsées, the solemn black of occupants and servants contrasts mournfully with the bright blue and gold, green, or brown liveries which were "their wont." The young gentlemen, "scions of a noble house," whose greatest delight consisted in the fastest possible horses, and the lightest possible tilburies, dogcarts, and phaetons, are no longer to be seen; they are gone to the war. Even the weather is different from what it should be at this season of the year, and seems to lend its powerful influence to aid the general melancholy. Although the rain has for the past two days ceased, it is still cold and uninviting; in fact, so autumn-like, that one expects at each moment to see the leaves fall yellow and sere at the feet of the noble trees which are in reality just now in the full bloom and freshness of early summer. This is the effect that the war has upon me—a stranger; but I am satisfied that the French themselves are far from sympathising with me. Their military ardour carries them to such an extent, that the news of the death of one of their relatives who fell gloriously, is considered an honour that it would seem ingratitude to repine at. The victories of the French army up to the last advices, are a compensation for the dearth of gaiety in their much-loved Paris.

The managers of the Parisian theatres—those stoical beings who keep on the even tenor of their way in spite of war, peace, bad or good weather, or, in fact any event, no matter how great its importance—seem to be vieing with each other in the production of novelties. At the Français, a comedy of Colin d'Harleville's *Le Vieux Célibataire*, which seems to be a favourite with a certain class of critics here, has been reproduced. The plot is disagreeable, and the excellent acting of this amusing company is the only thing that

renders it acceptable to a general audience. The fine old comedy of the *Mariage de Figaro* has also been revived, and met with merited applause. The Gymnase, which ranks next to the Français, has produced a trifle in one act called the *Baron de Fourchevif*. This piece is well received because it is well played; but it is too decided an imitation of the well-known comedy of *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, by Molière, to ever become a very great favourite. The Gaité is producing a grand military piece which is well received. The scenery is good and this is a very opportune moment for its production; it is called *La Veille de Marengo*, and ends with the celebration of the battle of Magenta. The Vaudeville has reproduced *La Vie de Bohème*. This piece, which is in the same style as *La Dame aux Camélias*, *Les Filles de Marbre*, &c., is very successful with the *habitués* of this theatre; but when one thinks of the number of pieces whose plots resemble that of the *Dame aux Camélias*, we are tempted to exclaim with Hamlet "Something too much of this." The Palais Royal has produced a very amusing two-act farce, calle *La Banquet des Barbettes*. The "Barbettes" in question are eight young women who have worked together in the millinery establishment of Mme. Barbette, and who have agreed to dine together once a-year at the "Moulin Rouge," a celebrated Paris restaurant, and relate their adventures. The subject of the piece is one of these anniversary meetings, in which sentiment and honour are agreeably mingled. The piece was received with applause, and the "Chorus des Barbettes" was universally re-demanded.

I have observed nothing new this week in fashions. The weather has been bad, and but few fine toilettes are to be observed. Bathing costumes are to be seen in all shop windows and hanging at all shop doors, which is an indis-

putable sign that soon the Parisians will have begun to crowd all the fashionable bathing resorts. During the hot months of July and August the Parisians invariably become excessively "aquatic."

LETTER VIII.

The Battle of Solferino—Rejoicings in Paris—Reminiscences of the "Ranelagh."

Paris, Monday, June 27, 1859.

"GREAT battle; great victory!" Such were the words that electrified all France last Saturday morning. A telegram addressed to the Empress by the Emperor, announced that once more had the allied army caused the Austrian eagle to trail its wings in the dust. In vain did the Austrian army, to the number, it is said, of 240,000, and commanded by their youthful Emperor in person, attempt to retrieve the defeats of Montebello and Magenta. Sixteen hours of terrific combat proved that French enthusiasm and impetuosity were more than a match for German discipline and stubborn resistance. It is now asserted that the Emperor of Austria leaves his army in command of General Hess, while he is to hurry off to Vienna. Matters that can call him away at this time must indeed be of grave import. All accounts as yet received from the allied army agree in their testimony to the wonderful coolness and courage displayed by the French Emperor on this eventful day. Placed in the foremost ranks, his Majesty remained for hours in this exposed position, while officers and men were wounded and killed on all sides of him. Dr. Larrey, his Physician, who remained near him during the

whole of the battle, had two horses killed under him. Still his Majesty moved about as if unconscious of danger, and this temerity had the effect of causing the ardour of the soldiers to increase tenfold. Under the eye of their Sovereign they performed most wonderful deeds, and private letters received from the seat of war say that the wounded soldier, as he fell to the ground, shouted with a last effort, "Vive l'Empereur!" The Emperor Napoleon slept the night after this great battle in the same house that Francis Joseph had vacated that morning. As I said before, the news of this victory caused general rejoicing. Early on Saturday morning the boom of the cannon at the Invalides made known to expectant Paris that the army in which it feels so great a pride was once more victorious. Neighbours who had just thrust their heads out of their windows, congratulated each other, while on all side flags and banners were waving to the breeze, although 'twas as yet so early in the morning (six o'clock). In the afternoon, evident preparations were being made for an illumination that was to be general. All was stir and animation. The streets were crowded, and on all sides one could hear repeated the words, "Grande Victoire." As soon as "Night had thrown her sable mantle over Earth," Paris became resplendent with light. Paris, always so beautiful, was triply so, crowned with her garlands of dazzling light. From the Madeleine to the Bastille all was light as day. A thousand patriotic devices blazed and glimmered on all sides. Many of these seemed to meet with the hearty approval of the crowd, who testified their admiration by loud cheers. The public buildings were most beautifully illuminated. The Hotel de Ville was gorgeously so. The Tour St. Jacques, a tall, slender tower in the Rue de Rivoli, which overtops by far the high buildings in the vicinity, presented a



truly strange and beautiful aspect. Its summit was literally blazing with light: rows of flame being drawn around it. It was not merely to gaze at the fine illumination that so great a crowd had collected in the streets. It was expected that the Empress would come in from St. Cloud, and drive through the town. The Parisians were anxious to prove to her Majesty by their hearty acclamations, the extent of their sympathy. But these were vain hopes; the Empress did not come, and after many false alarms and much crushing and pushing to get forward, it became evident to the expectant crowd, from the lateness of the hour, that the Empress-Regent did not intend to make her appearance. A great number of carriages were slowly moving through the crowded streets; admirable order was observed, however, and no accident occurred to mar the pleasure of the *nuit de fête.* One thing I observed worthy of special notice; in all quarters of the city, rich and poor alike, the illumination was general. Even in the Quartier St. Antoine, where dwell the grumblers, each window had its farthing rushlight. On the day following (Sunday), a grand religious ceremony was celebrated at the Madeleine, as well as all the other churches, but with peculiar magnificence at the former. Rich velvet curtains were hung entirely around this immense building, and a magnificent altar had been erected at the principal entrance on the outside. A procession, formed of young girls, all dressed in white, headed by a band of music and several priests in gorgeous robes, marched several times round the church; after which a mass was celebrated at the altar I have already spoken of. An immense crowd witnessed the ceremony, and seemed duly impressed with its solemnity. On the 3rd of July next, a *Te Deum* for the late victory of the French arms will be sung in all the churches throughout France. In Paris, this imposing



ceremony is to take place at Notre Dame, when her Majesty will be present. No doubt the solemn pomp of this ceremony will equal any preceding one that has ever taken place in the fine old Cathedral. Thus the Parisians, who are so fond of sight-seeing, get illuminations and *Te Deums* for each victory.

Those persons who are attracted by the hot weather to seek some repose under the shade of the fine trees of the Bois de Boulogne, are all astonished at finding that the great establishment called the "Ranelagh" no longer exists. This veteran of the public balls of Paris and vicinity has, in fact, disappeared, and a new Boulevard will soon cross the place which has been so celebrated. Before its name is entirely effaced from the map of Paris, I deem it will not be unacceptable to your readers to hear a few facts which marked the inauguration of the first of these places of amusement, and to draw a contrast between the *bal champêtre* of 1774 and that of 1859. The *vogue* of the Park of Passy dates from the beginning of the eighteenth century, at the time when the Chateau de la Muette was occupied successively by the Regent and his daughter, the Duchesse de Berri, and subsequently by the young King Louis XV., whose magnificent *fêtes champêtres* drew, in addition to the Court, all the beauty and grace of Paris. The rich *salons* of the King were abandoned at the special request of his Majesty, who preferred dancing with the noble ladies on the green and fragrant sward. The actors who were summoned from Paris to appear before Royal eyes, were no longer listened to in the *Salle de Spectacle;* it was in the park, in the open air, that they performed. The King's partiality for out-door amusement gave to a man named Morison, a guard of the woods, the idea of creating at this place an establishment which would receive the noble pleasure-seekers when they found the



sun too hot, or desired to refresh themselves after the fatigue of the dance. Morison obtained from the Prince de Soubise, Governor of the Palace, permission to enclose a portion of the esplanade, and to construct therein a *café* and a theatre. These were soon built, and on the 25th July, 1774, the new dancing garden was inaugurated under the title of the Petit-Ranelagh—the name being suggested by that of an establishment of the same style, which was then in great favour, on the banks of the Thames. Morison's hopes were more than fulfilled. The *beau monde* in carriages constantly filled the garden in the day time, while at night the same faces were to be seen dancing on the levelled ground, seemingly as happy and lighthearted as the villagers who, outside the fence, gazed in unfeigned admiration at the frequenters of Ranelagh. It is said that Franklin was extremely fond of visiting this place, and in 1779 the Count d'Estaing was present and conducted to a seat of honour from which he was to behold a grand *feu d'artifice*, fired on the occasion of the taking of Grenada. But this good fortune was too good to last, and what was Morison's astonishment on receiving notice (July 2, 1779) that his establishment had been illegally constructed, permission not having been asked of the Grand Master of the Forest, and that opening his doors another night would entail upon him entire confiscation of his effects. This would have doubtless been the end of Ranelagh, if Louis XVI. had not taken it and its owner under his protection. By desire of the King, a decree passed the Council of State, confirming the concession of the Prince de Soubise. Soon after Marie-Antoinette occupied the Chateau de la Muette and honoured the balls of Ranelagh constantly with her presence. It was her greatest amusement to meet here the persons whose rank, wealth,

beauty, and *esprit* obtained for them the title of the *beau monde de Paris*. But another blow awaited the unfortunate Morison. The Reign of Terror began, and the noble knights and ladies who delighted to visit Ranelagh were replaced by the vulgar and unfeeling *sansculottes*. The coarse freedom of the *carmagnole* supplanted the stately minuet, and gross orgies took place in the garden that had once been the resort of all that was refined and beautiful. Debts accumulated on the head of the proprietor, who was obliged to tear down several outbuildings and sell the material to satisfy his hard-hearted creditors. But the nomination of the First Consul was another stroke of good fortune for Morison. Ranelagh was re-opened, and Madame Tallien and Madame Récamier, the leaders of fashion and beauty at that time, patronised it; and the establishment once again seemed like the Ranelagh of former days. This prosperity continued throughout the whole time of the First Empire; and Morison dying in 1812, was spared the grief of seeing at the time of the invasion the Cossacks wantonly ruining his flower-beds, and making stables of the graceful dancing halls. In 1818 the son-in-law of Morison re-opened the garden; and, under the protection of Charles X., again drew the fashionable Parisian world. Since that time, Ranelagh has always been considered a lovely spot, where families might take their children, to show them the very *bosquet* under which Marie-Antoinette had dined, and the hall where the Duchess de Berri had danced; but of late years the encroachments of that class known as the *demi-monde* have driven away all seekers of historical reminiscences. Each new invention in the art of fireworks was tried at Ranelagh, and the polka and crinoline own it as their place of birth. And thus finishes Ranelagh; in a few years its name will be



forgotten by the thoughtless, pleasure-seeking, ephemeral Frenchman. I am afraid I am getting over my limited space; but a few statistics in some of the French papers, together with many little anecdotes related by friends have tempted me.

I have still nothing new in the shape of fashions to communicate. So few of the fashionable ladies are in town, that the grand dressmakers have nothing to show except simple muslin dresses, which are made in last summer's style.

At the theatres, patriotic verses, relating to the last victory, and set to martial airs, are meeting with the usual plaudits of the sympathising auditors.

LETTER IX.

Funeral of General de Cotte—The "Te Deum" for the Victory of Solferino—Ovation to the Empress—Affability and Condescension of Her Majesty—The Relief Fund—Paris Amusements—Portraits of the Imperial Family—Fashions—Paris deserted.

Paris, Wednesday, July 6, 1859

The funeral of General de Cotte, Aide-de-Camp to the Emperor, took place yesterday, at the Church of St. Thomas d'Aquin, with all the honours due to his rank. This General died at Montechiaro, on the 22nd ult., from the rupture of an aneurism, and his body was sent to France by order of the Emperor Napoleon. A large number of military men of rank were present at the funeral, and the Great Bodies of the State were represented by deputations of their members. After the religious ceremony—which was a more than usually imposing one—the body was conveyed to the Cemetery of Pèse

la Chaise for interment, escorted by several companies of soldiers. General de Cotte belonged to an ancient and noble family of France, and was much esteemed by the Emperor, and his loss is deeply regretted by the whole army.

The *Te Deum*, which I announced to you last week was to be performed in celebration of the battle of Solferino, took place on Sunday morning, the 3rd of July, with great pomp. The Cathedral of Notre Dame was even more beautifully decorated than for the *Te Deum* for the victory of Magenta; the Imperial *cortége* was longer; the weather was more favourable—in fact, every circumstance seemed to lend its aid to make the *Te Deum* for the success of the French arms at Solferino a gorgeous and imposing sight. A detachment of dragoons headed the procession; these were followed by eight carriages, in the last of which was seated the Princesses Clotilde and Mathilde; then another detachment of mounted soldiery, followed by the carriage of her Majesty the Empress, at whose side sat the Prince Impérial. This carriage, I think, is the most gorgeous one I ever beheld. It is the one used only on gala days, and, if I am not mistaken, was built expressly to convey the Imperial couple to Notre Dame on the occasion of the baptism of the Prince Impérial. The Empress was dressed entirely in white muslin, with a Leghorn bonnet, which was ornamented with a red rose on the left side. The Prince Imperial was also dressed in white. His little Highness kept constantly kissing his hand to the citizens, who continued shouting lustily till the *cortége* passed out of sight. He is a pretty child, and his likeness to his mother is very striking. On returning from the church, the carriage containing her Majesty was literally covered with flowers, and I saw several persons push through the crowd, walk up to the side of the carriage, and present the Empress

with bouquets, which her Majesty invariably put forth her hand to accept, at the same time smiling graciously to the donors.

It has been said that the affability of the Empress has been a very great aid to the Emperor; she is certainly very popular, as any one may witness, if they will only move through a crowd in Paris, as I did last Sunday. All sorts of blessings are invoked upon her head, and every workman, washerwoman, or *gamin* has got a story to tell of the Empress's smiling particularly to *him* or *her* on some certain occasion. It is well-known that the Empress has founded two or three hospitals in Paris, as well as endowed several others which were already founded. The fact, however, of her visiting them is seldom, if ever, mentioned in the papers, and I had an impression that her visits to these beneficent institutions were like those of the angels, "few and far between." I was therefore agreeably astonished, on being told that her Majesty visited these places very often, spoke always kindly, and for several moments, to each sick person, gave them money, and had further desired that her going there should not be continually paraded in the public prints. This, if true, I consider a circumstance that redounds to her credit in the highest degree. That sovereigns should give money to these institutions is but their duty; no extraordinary praise is due for an act which requires so little sacrifice; but that a woman like Eugénie, in the plentitude of health and power, surrounded by admirers (sincere or hypocritical, they are still admirers), should leave but *for an hour* her abode of luxury, her *spirituelle* associates, to go to that scene of misery—a hospital—to converse with the ignorant and low-born, to comfort them in their hour of ailing, is, indeed, praiseworthy.

The subscription for the relief of the wounded and families of the killed in Italy is progressing famously. In addition to a large number of private subscriptions, which are unusually generous, the Empress has given a donation of 50,000f., Prince Jérome 10,000f., the Princess Clotilde 5,000f., and each of the other members of the Managing Committee 500f.

Much amusement has been caused in Paris by the announcement in several of the daily papers that the young ladies of Brescia had bound themselves by oath to marry none but persons who have been wounded in the Italian war. This, of course, is an excellent opportunity for the civilians to grumble, and for the military to rejoice.

The theatrical and operatic critics of Paris are busily engaged in predicting changes in the companies of the principal theatres. These oracles declare that next winter will see Mme. Borghi-Mamo leave the Grand Opera, and resume her old position at the Italiens. All lovers of song will be glad of the change, as this *artiste* always appeared to disadvantage when singing in French. M. Roger, the favourite tenor, who created such a *furore* at the Opéra Comique, some years since, and who left that theatre to go to the Grand Opéra, is, it is said, not to be re-engaged, his voice having become too weak for the vastness of the Salle Lepelletier. Michot, of the Lyrique, is named as his successor. This, however, is not probable, as Michot has a long engagement with Carvalho, the manager of the Theatre Lyrique. After lauding the new tenor of the Opéra Comique, Montaubry, up to the skies, the French critics are now trying to pull him down, by saying that his voice has not as much volume as is required for that theatre. His voice is certainly not stentorian, but it possesses a delicacy and sweetness rarely encountered in these tenorless days. It is the female members of the Opéra Comique

whose voices require strengthening; even Madame Cabel, who has received so much praise for her *rendition* of the *rôle* of Dinorah, in *Le Pardon de Ploërmel*, has a wiry, thin voice, which would never pass muster were it not for its flexibility. Mdme. Faure Lefebvre is still worse, and the others in proportion. One of the pleasantest places of amusement in Paris during the summer months is the little Salle d'Eté in the Champs Elysées, known as the Bouffes Parisiens. The manager has the good sense not to present pieces beyond the capabilities of his actors, and the consequence is that everything they play is well done. The first representation of an *opérette*, called *Un Mari à là Porte*, took place here a few evenings ago, and was well received. The music is sprightly, and prettily sung by Mdles. Tantin and Geoffrey. But why is it that in pieces of this, and sometimes even a higher class, the husband is invariably represented as a coarse, awkward lout, detested by the wife, and invariably the dupe of her and her maid? This type of a husband is always accompanied by a young gentleman who possesses every virtue and grace imaginable, coupled with a tenor voice and a very insinuating manner. How is it possible to refrain from applauding the wife for keeping *à la porte* her disagreeable *mari*, while Madame, in a charming duet, conceals her lover in the closet! It is in this that the immorality, which they disclaim with such indignation, lies, and not perhaps in the dialogues, which have undoubtedly been reformed.

I mentioned in a former letter the fact of the Emperor, Empress, and Prince Imperial having visited the photographic establishment of Disderi and Co., before the departure of his Majesty for the seat of war. The result of this visit is, that all the windows of the fine print-shops are filled with photographs of their Majesties in every imaginable posture, both



standing and sitting. The exceedingly low price of these objects, added to the fact of their being excellent likenesses, has caused them to have an extensive sale.

On Monday the Empress, accompanied by the Count de Morny and several *dames d'honneur*, visited the exhibition of paintings of Ary Scheffer.

The Exhibition of Paintings of Living Artsts, in the Palais de l'Industrie, will close positively on the 10th inst. The prizes will be distributed the day following, and the lottery will take place the next day. It appears that the sale of tickets for the lottery has been so great, that the Commission has been enabled to buy several more pictures, which will be drawn for. The Emperor took ten thousand tickets, which are sold at a franc a piece.

The weather continues to be overpoweringly hot. Paris is so dull that it really seems a moral impossibility to stay here. The fashionable dress-makers and milliners are in despair at the flight of their *clientèle*, as they call those who patronise them; even the Empress seems so occupied with the affairs of State, that the ingenious Roger and Ode, those sprites who are called upon to imagine and invent unimaginable and uninventable dresses and bonnets, are for the moment reposing on their laurels, and enjoying quiet, at least for a time.

I think the colour for dresses and bonnets which predominates this summer, is green, in all its different shades. I saw the Empress on one of the hot days in the beginning of the week; she was on her way to the Tuileries to preside over a Council of Ministers. Her Majesty wore a dress of white muslin, with three insertions of *Valenciennes* lace about two inches and a half wide, in the skirt; under the lace was placed a pea-green ribbon. The shawl was of white muslin with two deep flounces, the edge of each being trimmed with



Valenciennes lace and green ribbon to correspond. The bonnet was a fine split straw trimmed with green ribbon and *blonde* lace. A parasol of the same shade of green, and covered with Brussels lace, completed this pretty and cool toilette. When I said that green would predominate, I, of course, meant it to be understood, that it will be the most fashionable after the *mauve*, which is justly named "*La Reine des Couleurs.*"

I think in my capacity of faithful *chroniqueuse* of the fashions, the *beau monde*, &c. of Paris, I must leave the deserted capital for a short time, and from either the enticing Conversation Rooms of Baden-Baden, Homburg, Wiesbaden, or from the romantic and picturesque, but still fashionable haunts in the Pyrenees, or yet again from the sea-shore, where the fatigued Parisienne seeks to repair her winter's dissipation with a course of baths—from one of these places, I repeat, must I give a faithful report to my readers of what fashionable Paris is doing.

LETTER X.

Return of the Emperor—Reception of the Peace News throughout France—Distribution of Prize Medals at the Exhibition of Paintings—Hot Weather—Reminiscences of St. Cloud.

Paris, Wednesday, July 20, 1859.

LAST Sunday morning the Emperor Napoleon returned to the Imperial residence at St. Cloud. His Majesty arrived at the terminus of the Lyons Railway at ten o'clock, and took the *Chemin de Ceinture* to St. Cloud. His Majesty had desired that their should be no ceremonious reception

and the consequence was, that he passed round Paris without the inhabitants having the slightest idea that he was so near. It is still the intention to have the *grande entrée* of the Garde Imperiale, with the Emperor at the head, on the 15th of August—the *fête* Napoleon. With true woman's curiosity, I had resolved to get a peep at his Majesty on his arrival, and for that purpose spent the day at St. Cloud. The railway officials of course would not permit us to enter the station, but we placed ourselves on the avenue leading to the château, and had the satisfaction of seeing his Majesty pass. The Italian campaign has had its effects upon him, for I assure you he is as bronzed and weatherbeaten as any of his grenadiers. At the gate which leads into the park, were waiting to receive his Majesty, the Empress and Prince Impérial, Prince Murat, General Rolin, Count Tascher de la Pagerie, M. Mocquard, and several persons belonging to the Imperial household. The Prince Impérial was in the costume of a grenadier of the guard. As the Emperor approached the park gate, the Empress, holding the little Prince by the hand, went forward to meet him. The Emperor embraced her most warmly, and taking the Prince up in his arms, kissed him repeatedly. The Emperor, although, as I have said before, bronzed by the sun, yet seemed in excellent health and spirits. His Majesty wore the undress uniform of a General of Divison, with the kepi. General Fleury, the Prince de la Moskowa, and several orderly officers, arrived with the Emperor. His Majesty embraced several persons, and shook hands with a number of others. Their Majesties, followed by their suites, then proceeded to the Palace in open carriages. In about an hour after the Emperor received the Princes and Princesses of the Imperial Family, and at twelve o'clock attended Divine Service in the Chapel of the Palace.

Afterwards all the Ministers were admitted to pay their respects.

The *Moniteur* publishes a decree, signed by the Emperor at the head-quarters of Travagliato, which officially announces a number of promotions and nominations in the Legion of Honour for gallant conduct at the battle of Magenta. A second decree makes two nominations as Knight in the same order conferred on Sardinian officers.

The provincial papers are all filled with accounts of the effect produced by the announcement of peace. The *Mémorial des Pyrenées* says that the day on which the official announcement of peace was made to the Austrian prisoners, these unfortunate men gave themselves up to rejoicing and gaiety. "In the evening, about eight," says the journal, "at the time when every one was taking his evening promenade, the barracks presented the most animated *coup d'œil.* The Austrian prisoners were in an ecstacy of delight, which was also shared by our soldiers. At each moment they raised the loudest cries of 'Vive l'Empereur!' 'Vive Napoleon!' Putting themselves in the ranks beside our soldiers, they marched quickly over the whole court-yard, singing patriotic airs. But this did not seem sufficient to express their joy, as they suddenly threw themselves into dancing positions, an Austrian soldier holding a French one, and executed a final galop, which drew forth the shouts and applause of the amused bystanders." The caricatures of Austrians, which filled the print shops up to the present time, have now been, by order of the authorities, removed. The fine spectacle called *La Voie Sacrée*, which was produced at the Théâtre de la Porte St. Martin, for which the Minister of War granted a detachment of soldiers to appear every night to give additional effect, has been withdrawn also by order. Some

amusing stories are told of this piece, which represented battles of the Italian war, and among others the following appears that the actors, who were to personate the Austri objected for a long time to their disagreeable *rôles;* and a the first night they formally declared their intention leaving the theatre rather than play again. The excit French audience had allowed itself so to be carried away the events of the play, that the person who played Giu had had missiles, such as small stones, thrown at hi this of course was soon stopped, but all sorts of invecti hurled at his unfortunate head. The manager knew r what to do; but it suddenly occurred to him that he mig sign a treaty of peace with his belligerent actors by dividi them in two equal portions, and allowing one set to pl Austrians one night, and French the next, and *vice vers* This succeeded admirably, and so they played alternate French and Austrians till the piece was stopped.

The distribution of medals to the artists judged worth who had exhibited this year at the Palace of Industry, too place last Friday morning, at nine o'clock. M. Fould Minister of State, made a few remarks, in which he men tioned the fact of the exhibition having been so well attende in spite of the uneasiness occasioned by the war. The Count de Nieuwerkerke then read out the names of persons destined for prizes, and each artist stepped up to receive the reward of merit. I observed that the Count shook hands cordially with each in token of congratulation. M. Muller, historical painter, received the first prize. Count de Nieuwerkerke remarked that there were several to whom he was obliged to give but the *mention honorable*, who really deserved medals, but owing to their limited number he was unable to award them.

The weather continues frightfully hot. Those persons whom business, or interest, or some other cause keeps in Paris, may be seen every Sunday, after mass, moving in great bodies to the different railway stations, whence they set out to spend the day in one of the country places which surround Paris, and return by the evening trains. St. Cloud is a favourite spot, and it well deserves to be. The position of the little village is charming, and a thick forest invites you with its shade, while the Seine, at this point very lovely, goes murmuring softly by. The most beautiful country-houses to be found near Paris are here, and lend their aid to make the panorama complete. And then every Sunday we have the Grandes Eaux, or playing of the magnificent fountains, which surpass anything of the kind even at Versailles. For me it is a great pleasure to leave for awhile this great monster Paris, with all its gaiety, its wickedness, its misery and luxury, and seek repose of body and mind under the wide-spreading branches of the trees in the Park of St. Cloud. How many grave events have passed at this place during three centuries. Formerly, on the site of the present chateau there was a habitation called the Hotel de Gondi, where Henri III. lodged when he came with the King of Navarre to besiege Paris. The last remaining scion of the noble house of Valois was here sent to his long home by the poignard of Jacques Clement. The manner in which the domain of St. Cloud was acquired by the crown and became princely property is rather strange. Under the regency of Anne of Austria a *controleur* of finances named Hervard, had constructed on the site of the ancient Hotel de Gondi, a most beautiful country house. This capitalist, who, during the troubles of the Fronde, had enriched himself immensely, was most prodigal in his outlay



for the ornamenting of his house, which was in the midst of vast and superb gardens filled with statuary; it was reported that the house and garden had cost the financier the immense (in those days) sum of twelve hundred thousand livres. The beautiful residence had not been completed more than a fortnight when one day Hervard, to his immense astonishment, received a visit from his Eminence the Cardinal Mazarin, who, entering familiarly into the grand *salon*, graciously saluted Hervard, who was swelling with pride at receiving so illustrious a visitor. Mazarin explained courteously that his object in coming was to see a house which had become so noted for its beauty and magnificence. The flattered owner was only too happy to escort his Eminence through all the different rooms, and was rewarded for his desire to please by one of Mazarin's most gracious smiles. Having concluded the circuit of the property, the wily Minister, in an altered tone, and with stern look, said, "Well, sir, and from where did you take the money with which you have built this?" It was in vain the wretched man protested that he had taken nothing—that the house had not cost so much as was supposed—that by skilful dealing with architects, painters, carpenters, &c., he had been enabled to get it for the moderate sum of one hundred thousand livres. "*Vraiment*," replied Mazarin, "I am glad you got it for so little; the King could not have afforded to pay much more; but he will give you that. Please see that all your goods and chattles, yourself included, are out of the place in less than twenty-four hours." Saying which, the King's adviser walked triumphantly away, without paying the slightest attention to Hervard's reiterations of not wanting to sell, or his frantic remonstrances against the manner in which the bargain had been made. Louis the XIV. was pleased often to boast of this adventure. His Majesty was



not above making a few thousands when it was in his power. He was so delighted with Mazarin's mode of procedure, that he used it himself some time after, when he asked Madame de Louvois to exchange the beautiful domain of Meudon for the far inferior one of Choisy, the property of the Dauphin. Louis told the lady that it was not proper that the widow of a Minister should possess a country house finer than that of the inheritor of the Crown of France. Meudon has ever since belonged to the Crown, and is now the residence of Prince Jerome, uncle to the Emperor.

LETTER XI.

Chroniqueuse deserts Paris—A Railway Journey through a beautiful country—Continuation by Diligence—Arrival at Etrétât—Search for Lodgings—Successful at last—Pleasures of the Sea Side—Bathing sans cérémonie—A Welcome Sound—A Fascinating Young Man—The Charm Dispelled—A Word on the Emperor—A Provincial Hercules—Visions of the Night.

Etretât, Tuesday, July 26, 1859.

FINDING that Paris was becoming insufferably dull, hot, and uncomfortable, that for ten years such heat had not been known, your correspondent, with a desperation which can only be explained when one takes into consideration the discomfort of all Parisian apartments—those badly ventilated and unhomelike abodes, where one is supposed to be exceedingly gay, and is in reality exceedingly unhappy—left the "gay (?) capital" in search of cool and refreshing breezes, of green and tempting verdure, of the thousand allurements that the country always possesses for every one except those who live

there. At seven o'clock, then, we left Paris by the Havre railway, and after skimming for three hours over the most beautiful country I have as yet seen in France, we arrived at the old picturesque town of Rouen. This place is situated in a valley, and the fine old cathedral, noted in history, looms up high and dark above the surrounding houses. A few moments comprised our stay at Rouen, and with a whistle and a shriek from the iron horse, on we rushed through a tunnel to emerge into another beautiful valley. The white houses peeping out ever and anon from amidst the green foliage give an air of life and animation to this truly lovely scene. At Beuzeville we took the diligence, a rickety-looking conveyance, drawn by three tottering old quadrupeds. The luggage being piled upon the top of the coach, and the passengers safely stowed away inside, the driver mounted to his seat, and after sundry *Heugh donc*, and several severe lashes of his large whip, the horses started off in a gallop, which soon subsided into a trot, the said trot threatening at each moment to subside into a walk. I lay back in my corner of the *coupé*, and philosophised within myself on the inestimable benefits conferred upon us by steam. I was soon aroused from my reverie, however, by the peculiar beauty of the country through which we were passing. Prairies covered with variegated crops stretched as far as the eye could reach on either side; while here and there groves fresh and green added to the beauty of the whole scene. As we rattled along the shady road, the temperature was so cool, so different from that of Paris, that I inwardly rejoiced at having made up my mind to leave the capital. The freshness of the atmosphere was accounted for by our nearing the sea, and soon our place of destination (Etrétât) was in view. As we approached the town, I perceived it was being rapidly improved, as on all



sides new, large, and commodious houses were to be seen, while many others were in course of construction. We drove immediately to the Hotel Blanquet; the landlady informed us that she was *désolée*, but that her house was full from garret to cellar; everything was occupied. Seeing the look of blank dismay which was depicted on the countenance of the whole of our party, the obliging hostess proffered her services to assist us in finding a lodging. We gratefully accepted the offer, and then commenced a search, which was anything but agreeable. Apartments too small, or apartments too large, were the result of our first half-hour's investigation. I observed, as a peculiarity of Etretât dwellings, that one is obliged to pass through the kitchen to get to the other rooms, while the narrow staircases are very antagonistic to Paris crinolines. But, "Where there's a will, there's a way;" and we at length succeeded in finding a house, which, barring the kitchen as an entrance, and the narrow staircase, was exceedingly clean and comfortable, and commanded a fine view of the sea. I determined to take a bath immediately, as the ride in the cars had been a dusty one; and accordingly sallied out and found that it was the fashionable hour for immersion, being then just four P.M. Etretât is situated on a small bay forming a semicircle, bounded on each side by huge perpendicular cliffs. The little bathing huts are ranged on the beach in front of the Casino. The only *désagrément* about the beach, is the fact that it is covered with large pebbles, which are uncomfortable, as they cut the feet; sand is much more agreeable. The ladies and gentlemen, however, sit down upon the stones *sans cérémonie*; chairs are not at all in demand. A loud laugh and some gay remarks attracted our attention to a party of young ladies and gentlemen who had come for their afternoon bath, (ladies and gentlemen bathe

together here!) They disappeared into their huts and came out in a few moments afterwards; but alas! how changed! The blooming young ladies who, but an instaut before, had so charmed me by the elegance of their *tournure*, appeared in their bathing dresses, what they were in reality, poor little thin shivering beings. One of our party not inaptly compared them before bathing to the peacock, and after to the crow. For the men it was not quite so bad; of course they do not look so well as when in all the luxury of the last new Regent-street fashion; but the change was not so striking. I must do the ladies the justice to say, that once the bath over and the unbecoming costume discarded, they reappeared in all the glory of hat, feathers and crinoline. Some German writer tells us that "it is the soul that makes the man, and not the outward seeming;" but I greatly fear that the remark does not apply to Parisian ladies in the present state of fashions. After bathing, we took a short walk, and saw some strange old caverns, &c., which, as you may readily suppose, had legends attached to them. Some of the most striking and truth-like ones I may repeat in my next letter.

A deep and melancholy sounding bell called us, as we afterwards discovered, to dinner; for at the first moment I thought it was the signal of a fire or some other great public disaster. It is only when one has lived a length of time in Paris—that city so totally devoid of church chimes or bells of any sort—that one can understand the feeling of melancholy that is occasioned by the ringing of bells. Delighted at finding my fears, as regarded fire, unfounded, and not less pleased at knowing that dinner was ready, we entered the large and well-kept *salle à manger* of the Hótel Blanquet. Opposite us sat a young man, whose face immediately riveted my attention—such a dreamy countenance—so etherial in



appearance, that I immediately began comparing him (in my own mind), to all and each of my favourite authors, and wondering which one he was like. Not Shakespeare, for Shakespeare was too old—not Moore, for Moore was too fat—not Byron, for Byron was not so good a figure. By this time the soup was served to my Adonis. If he had known how I hoped he would refuse it, so as not to break my illusion, I am sure he would have done so; but no, he ate it with the greatest apparent gusto, and oh, horror! a huge piece of beef, weighing, I am certain, more than two pounds, disappeared from before my astonished gaze as if it had been a small bit of bread. Nor was this all—dish after dish was served in the same way, and I now began to look upon my gentleman as a monster, a frightful ogre, devouring all within his grasp. I was assured by my companion, to whom I afterwards confided my sensations of disgust, that the sea air would in all probability give me quite as ferocious an appetite. This was not consoling; but when the next morning's breakfast bell rang my appetite was so great, that I began to feel more generously inclined towards the young gentleman, though all the poetic imaginings which his appearance created had vanished from my mind, never more to return.

The Casino is the place of re-union during the middle of the day; there are to be found the newspapers of all the surrounding towns, and the principal ones from Paris. I find from the tone of these country journals, and from the general remarks of the people, that the speech of the Emperor to the "Grand Conseil d'Etat" meets with universal approbation. You have no idea with what veneration these country people hold the name of Napoleon, and I am sure that even an unworthy scion of their great general would hereafter stand a better chance for power than any Legitimist.

But I am getting off my subject, and describing conversations, when I should devote myself to individuals and localities.

During the bathing season, these good people strive to make enough money out of the visitors to enable them to live in ease during the winter, and it is amusing to see the means sometimes resorted to. One great athletic fisherman has made himself, for the time being, clown or strong man. He goes about in a fearfully ugly costume, and certainly performs great feats of strengh, such as lifting weights—three hundred pounds with one hand, a two hundred pound weight with his teeth, and like horrible and unnatural tricks. His performance interested me greatly at first, as I am fond of observing the strength of men (perhaps we unfortunate women admire feats of strength because we feel our own great incapability to perform them). I suppose my donation into his peculiar little Egyptian-looking bowl (a sort of ware which is peculiar to this place), was more than usually liberal, as I now dare not show myself outside the principal door of the hotel, where the strong man holds his levees, to such an extent has he bored me with his performances. The interest I took in it, I need hardly state has grown "small by degrees, and beautifully less," ever since the first time of witnessing.

It is only when we lose a comfort, that we appreciate it to its full extent. I always knew that Paris beds were very comfortable; in fact, I have often suggested to some of my London friends their being introduced generally into the great metropolis; but since I have been at Etretât, they have appeared to me like the oasis in the Paris desert: the one I have here is peculiarly hard and uncomfortable. I confess to not being exceedingly brave, and last night the good landlady, who has, in accordance with my request, slept in the

kitchen, so that in case of an invasion and robbery she would fall the first victim, thus allowing me time to escape, was obliged to go during the day to a neighbouring town, from which she only returned this morning. Knowing that she was not there to fall first, according to my ingenious, but perhaps rather selfish plan, I passed the night in imagining all sorts of evil, and only fell to sleep to be smothered by the three hundred pound weights of the strong man, which operation, though crushing the breath entirely out of my body, did not quite finish me; this was reserved for the handsome young man with a voracious appetite, who turned out to be a cannibal from the Sandwich Islands, and devoured me piecemeal, leaving me in full consciousness of the diabolical performance the whole time it was going on. The arrival of the Diligence, with the driver blowing lustily upon the horn, awoke me from this disagreeable position, and warned me it was time for breakfast.

LETTER XII.

Life at Etretât: its Legends and Traditions—The "Trou à Romain"—A Solemn Admonition—A Visit to the Château de Fréfosse—Representatives of the Press at Etretât—The "Provincial Hercules" and his "Little Bowl" again—A Shoal of Beggars.

Etretât, August 3, 1859.

SINCE my last letter, I have passed the time most agreeably in visiting the places of interest near or in this pretty village, and have culled some legends and anecdotes, which will, I hope, interest my readers, and perhaps tempt those who may contemplate visiting the French provincial towns not to



neglect the oldest and most picturesque spot in *la vieille Normandie*. My visit here has given me a better opinion of the French as a nation. I find that the fickleness and dishonesty for which they are renowned is confined in a great measure, to the large cities, and that here some portion at least of English integrity and uprightness may be seen. I shall never regret my sojourn, were it for no other than that reason; but the beauty of the scenery, and the invigorating effects of the sea-air, will always cause me to rejoice at having resigned Baden-Baden for the modest, unassuming Etretât. Yesterday, preceded by our guide—the inevitable guide, who always insists on accompanying you, and forcing you to look at things which don't interest you, and hurrying on when you come to things that do—we climbed up the rocky cliff on the left of Etretât, and which stands out bold and black into the vast expanse of sea which stretches far as the eye can reach beneath the rock. Our object was to see the *trou à Romain*, or "Romain's hole," so called from the fact of a seaman, named Romain, having remained for a year's time in the black and desolate hole without ever once leaving it. The circumstances which led the man to seek this uncomfortable abode may be told in a few words. Romain Bisson was the son of a fisherman of Etretât, and had been accustomed from his earliest childhood to visit all portions of the rocks to play within dangerous proximity to that sea which gave support to his family and himself. The solitary life he led, joined to a character naturally gloomy and ferocious, had, at the age of twenty-one years, succeeded in rendering him an object of terror and dislike to the few human beings who knew him. As the period for the drawing of the Conscription drew near, Romain became possessed with the (to him) horrible idea that he would draw an unlucky number. To leave his parents,

his village, and his well-beloved haunts was to Romain an insupportable idea. Not that he lacked courage, for the *dénouement* will shew that he ran more dangers to avoid being a soldier than would ever have befallen him on the field of battle. His parents agreed with Romain that they would hide their son in a hole in the rock, which, though well-known to all the fishermen as existing, had never been visited but by the fearless Romain. To this place, which has now been made less difficult of access by a rude wooden bridge being thrown across a before almost impassable pass, Romain betook himself, and in the dead of night his parents, by means of ropes, drew up to him meat, bread, water, wood, and, in fact, everything necessary for his sustenance. This passed in 1813. All the villagers thought that Romain had wandered off to other lands, though no one had seen him depart. For a whole year the secret was kept by the unhappy parents, who night after night left their home to give nourishment to their hidden child. At last, one night, some mariners returning from a prolonged fishing excursion, imagined they saw a light in a cavity of the cliff. This revelation, of course, filled the ignorant and superstitious fishermen and women with terror, but a few of the bravest determined to ferret out the mystery, and at last perceived Romain at the entrance of the cave, who, unconscious of their presence, had come to breathe a little of the air, which certainly could never have entered into his miserable prison. The officers of justice were soon on the spot, and motioned and called to him to come down; he replied that he would never be a soldier. He was told that if he did not come down he would be shot; he answered that he would sooner die than be a soldier. Ladders were immediately tied together and put against the rock, whose height seemed to scorn their insignificant



length. Every way was tried, but Romain kept up such a continuous volley of stones and large bits of rock, that the invaders were at last obliged to retire and have recourse to firing by order of the sub-prefect. Romain laughed at this feeble means as he retired into the back of the cavern, and heard the report echo against his rocky walls. The siege lasted four days. The father and mother being prevented from furnishing food, Romain now found that he could not long hold out, as he was feeble and worn out from excitement and want of sustenance. After a day passed in gathering stones, the largest and heaviest being the most preferred, Romain determined, at two o'clock in the morning, "with as bright a moon as ever shone," said the guide, to leave his place of confinement. I must now explain to you the situation of the cliff. At this place it is three hundred feet high, the side which projects into the sea being as straight, square, and smooth as a wall; the straight line of its side is only broken by a small rock about fifty feet in height, which is covered at high tide. On this rock the soldiers were stationed; their position was a bad one, as Romain, from his stronghold, could laugh at their efforts to shoot him, and pour stones on their heads till they were obliged to retreat. The sea rose rapidly, and soon the passage from the ground to the small rock was rendered impassable. Profiting by their absence from the rock, though with the consciousness that the soldiers were waiting for him, gun in hand, on shore, Romain descended, with the aid of both hands and feet, stepping on every stone which projected; suspended at three hundred feet above the infinite ocean, climbing down a cliff whose side presented scarcely a stone to place a foot upon, walking where no other human being had walked before, in the midst of the firing of the soldiery, the intrepid villager continued his descent and

reached the sea. The next morning his jacket and wooden shoes were found on the beach, from which circumstance it was supposed that he had thrown them off to lessen his weight in swimming, and had in all probability been lost. Years after he appeared; too long a time had passed to bring him again within the pale of the law, and after living for ten years a morose, dogged life, often spending whole days in the retreat where he had experienced such violent emotions, he one day threw himself from his hole, as it was then and is still called, and found in the very ocean which had borne him to a foreign land, a voluntary grave. The reason for this act was never known; it was supposed, however, that his intellect was impaired: he would never tell where he had been during his absence, nor any incident that befel him after his escape. Some of our party entered the hole, though nothing could have induced me to do so. They told me that it was a cavern about ten feet long and seven feet high, dark, gloomy, and repulsive. I hurried my companions away, for the very idea of a human being having passed a year of unhappiness there, was enough to render it anything but an amusing spot to me.

As I ran down the gently sloping cliff covered with beautiful green grass and glorious-coloured wildflowers, I was suddenly stopped by the stern voice of the detestable guide, who reminded us that the Chapelle de la Vierge Marie was in sight, and that we must all kneel down and repeat our *Ave Maria.* Some signs of grumbling being apparent, he solemnly assured us that if we did not, he would not answer for our safety in descending another rocky pass to which he proposed leading us. I settled the difficulty by deferring our visit to the last-named place to another day, and so we descended the cliff in safety, without the aid of the *Ave Maria.*

The next day we visited another curiosity of the place,



but one of a less mournful character. Permission was kindly given us by the owner, though he is at present living there, to visit the ancient Chateau de Fréfosse. This magnificent building was owned in the year 1452 by the noble Jean de Pelletol, Lord of Tilleul, the neighbouring village. The chateau and pleasure-grounds are surrounded on all sides by a moat, and it is easy to perceive that it was the place of refuge, in times of disturbance, of its noble owner. A subterranean passage, now closed, conducted from the library of Jean de Pelletol to the neighbouring village. The fine modern furniture with which it is now ornamented, contrasts strangely with the ancient and sombre architecture. I do not describe this interesting relic of olden times minutely, because the present owner has caused it to be restored, but, unfortunately, has not insisted upon the renovations being in the same style as the original building.

The principal editor of the *Figaro* is at present at this place. His letters are eagerly scanned when the paper arrives, as he is known to be exceedingly sarcastic, and every one expects to see some allusion to himself. Another Paris newspaper correspondent, Gustave Bourdin, is also writing from Etretât; the editor of the *Figaro* is Monsieur de Villemessant. M. Bourdin, in his last letter, speaks of the Strong Man who was my terror (and who has now fortunately disappeared). He says that being resolved to play a trick on the Strong Man, he offered, before that gentleman begun his entertainment, to buy in the expected receipts for the sum of three francs, which offer was eagerly accepted by the mountebank. The entertainment finished, the little Egyptian bowl has passed round, and to the horror of the Strong Man five franc pieces were showered in as if they had been sous. One gentleman placed the large sum of a hundred francs in

the bowl; it was a hard trial for the poor man, who found himself obliged to resign three hundred francs for three that he had received. He, however, submitted with as good a grace as possible, and gave the contents of the bowl to M. Bourdin, who, on reflection, said, "Here, *mon garçon*, I have played you a shabby trick, it was understood between myself and my friends that your honesty should be put to the test, and as you have proved yourself so faithful to your word, I think these gentlemen will applaud my desiring you to keep the money, which you need more than they." The writer adds that the joy which was depicted on the countenance of the mountebank can hardly be said to have been reflected on the others, especially the gentleman who contributed the hundred franc note to this practical joke. This is a very amusing story, but I may be excused if I doubt the truth of it, as nothing can pass in Etretât without every one's knowing it; and besides, that horrid man would certainly have yelled under my windows that time, as he invariably did, that he was going to begin his performance, and to please throw him a sou.

Speaking of sous, I may here mention that the French are continually complaining of the large number of beggars one meets in London, and all other parts of England, and of the excellent plan they (the French) have of forbidding the practice. Never in my life have I been so tormented with beggars as since my arrival here. Little beggars, big beggars, dirty beggars, clean beggars, old and young beggars, here unite to drive one raving mad; and yet the people tell you, and, in fact, it is posted up on every corner,

"La mendicité est interdite."



LETTER XIII.

The Village Festival—Visit to the "Cauldron"—A Daring Feat —A Homily on Reckless Sports—The Blessed Bread—The Ball—A Catastrophe—Perils of the Deep—Seaside Fashions —About to leave Etretât—The Lost Dog.

Etretât, August 9, 1859.

THE "Fête du Village" took place here last Saturday with the greatest possible merrymaking and rejoicing. According to French custom the morning was devoted to prayer, while the afternoon was given up to games, theatricals, dancing, and like festivities. I was determined to hear the "Grande Masse" at ten o'clock, as I knew there would be a peculiarity about it. This peculiarity consisted in the singing of several hymns by the fishermen, whose rough and untutored, but not inharmonious, voices, rose loud and strong, filling the little church with echoes. I was struck with the deep attention which these people gave to the sermon, and the air of sincere piety with which they formed themselves into a procession to leave the church. The scene was an imposing one; the gaudy appendages of the church contrasting strangely with the poor and dark-coloured garments of the fishermen and women. From the open windows we could gaze down upon the calm and motionless sea, its utter stillness making me (for a moment) fully concur in the opinion of the people, that it also was listening to and taking part in the ceremony. This is a fixed idea with them, it appears, and great is the bemoaning and bewailing if the sea is rough and angry during the mass of the Fête St. Sauveur. At twelve o'clock, all religious ceremonies were terminated, and the ringing of the bell for that hour was the signal for

the commencement of merrymaking. The villagers, both men and women, formed themselves into rings and danced about, expressing (in song) their hopes for the future and thanks for the past year. The village was literally inundated with mountebanks, charlatans, clowns, &c., all anxious to obtain a certain amount of sous from the inhabitants, in return for which they promised to perform wonders in the way of juggling, fire-eating, &c.

In the hope of getting away from the crowd, we strolled over the moss-covered cliff, or (in French) *falaise*, with the intention of seeing the "cauldron," so called from the fact of its being a narrow space between two rocks, where the incoming wave is dashed first on one side and then on the other till at last meeting in the centre and immediately separating in two parts it again meets with a tremendous concussion, and then rushes out foaming and with terrific noise. It was apparent, however, that our desire for solitude was not to be gratified here, for on inquiring the cause of the unusual crowd gathered round the cauldron, we were informed that some daring man had caused a rope to be stretched from one rock to the other, and, in imitation of the *traversée* by Blondin of the Niagara Falls, was about to cross here in the same manner. The respective distances could not of course be compared, but had this man fallen into the boiling waves below, he would have met with just as certain death as the other, if he had lost his footing. I observed that it was not only the ignorant and astonished peasantry who seemed to watch with delight this (to me) horrible feat; but it was rather that class of persons, now assembled for the baths, whom experience and education would lead one to imagine would deprecate rather than encourage such foolhardiness. I have always been of opinion that it is the lowest and most

reprehensible species of morbid curiosity which acts as t inducement to civilised beings to *assister* at such senseless a wicked exhibitions. Of late years there appears to be prevailing partiality for wonderful exhibitions of recklessne To look at an individual prove "how nearly man may mat an ape," to witness a play of muscles in every possible w contrary to nature, is now one of the most fashionab pastimes. Is anything gained by seeing how little val man places upon his own life? In verity, if this continue it will be no longer in our power to speak of as inhuman th gladiatorial sports of Rome, or of the much-condemned bull fights of Spain. Innocent amusement is a necessity of life Recreation of some sort is as necessary to the human race a the air we breathe, and whatever tends in any manner harm lessly to beguile us, and make us contented with life, should be encouraged, but reckless jeopardising of one's existence can never with truth be called amusement.

But to return. In descending the *falaise* we met several fishermen carrying the *pain bénit*, or blessed bread, the said bread being in reality cake, and the said cake being decorated in the highest possible manner with green leaves and artificial roses. They offered us some, which we declined; not forgetting, however, to give them each a piece of money to aid them in the evening sports. On our return to the beach we found there had been a regatta which had been won by somebody, that somebody being just in the act of receiving the immense wreath which was the reward of the victor. In the evening a grand ball took place at the Casino. At this *réunion* we lost sight of the fishermen, and found ourselves in the company of elegantly-dressed ladies and gentlemen. One might almost have fancied oneself back in Paris; the hall was brilliantly illuminated, the music was excellent, and till

midnight the whole affair was characterised by that *verve* and *laiser-aller* so peculiarly French, when at that fatal hour the loud cries of the fishermen attracted all to the beach. The sea had suddenly risen, and while the country people were rejoicing, had carried off all the bathing-huts, and threatened at each moment to carry off any one who should venture on the beach. The moaning and bewailing of the owner of the huts, the anxiety of mothers whose children had for the moment disappeared, was strangely in contrast with the festivities of the half-hour before. Soon all hope of saving any of the lost property was resigned, and after assuring myself that that was the extent of the misfortune, I left them to seek my kitchen, ante-chamber, and narrow staircase.

The next morning the sea continued raging with the same violence, and the fisherman's wives who stood on the beach watching for the arrival of the little barks which contained their husbands, received my deep and heart-felt, if not expressed commiseration. Poor creatures! Even when they descried the frail bark, what agony to watch it coming in—now in sight and now disappearing behind a wave whose immensity seemed sure to crush it, Most of these women are used to this; but there was one, a young pale creature holding an infant who was not, they told me, "native, and to the manner born," who especially attracted my attention. This was the first experience she had had of the horrible uncertainty of a sailor's life, and when the manly young fellow did spring ashore and grasp her to his arms it was just in time to prevent her sinking on the pebbly beach. The uncertainty of his ever returning, and the emotion of seeing him safe, had been too much for her; happily, as the French say, *La joie ne tue pas*, "Joy does not kill;" and we afterwards saw her, gay and animated, looking

triumphantly at the sea as it retreated grumblingly and angrily.

As the season advances the fashionables arrive, and the quiet little village is full of ladies and gentlemen dressed in the last Parisian *modes*. The little cloak, called the *Bain de Mer*, is just now in the plenitude of its glory. It is composed of a light striped cloth, the stripes running downwards and meeting at the seam in the back. I saw an extremely pretty one yesterday, composed of soft white cloth, with narrow black stripes, trimmed all round with a bit of black silk about an inch wide, and cut on the cross, which was set on to the cloth with a red silk *liseré* or cording. The *chapeau retroussé* is much worn, though the old-fashioned flat-brimmed hat still holds its own. If it is not so coquetish as the turned-up shape, it certainly protects the face better from the sun. Those ladies who object to being burnt by the scorching rays of that luminary still abide by the *chapeau tombant*. The Marquise de M. and the Comtesse de L., two of our most fashionable and beautiful Parisian *belles*, whose *recherché* costumes created such a *furore* at the balls of the Tuileries last winter, appeared yesterday on the beach here in dresses which attracted universal attention. A celebrated painter now sojourning here, declared that be could almost fancy that two of the ancient portraits of the Museum of Versailles had taken life and come to Etretât. These dresses were composed of white *piquè* cut in the *fourreau* form (the *fourreau* is the *basque*, which reaches to the feet); they were trimmed round the bottom of the skirt with a broad silk band, cut cross way of Scotch plaid colours. The *Pompadour* belt raised them in four places, showing a white petticoat underneath, with numberless small tucks, and rather short, reaching to the boot-tops. The body was embellished by two large

buttons behind, covered with Scotch plaid silk, the same buttons, but smaller, fastening the dress up to the throat. The sleeve just allowing room for a neat undersleeve with turnover cuff to be seen. Buttons of the same material all the way up the outside of the sleeve, which has two seams, one on the outside and one inside. The hat of the Marquise de M. was of coarse white English straw edged with black velvet, with two large turkey-cock feathers (such as are used in England sometimes for fly brushes) one on either side. This *chapeau* was turned up at the sides, and had a large rosette of black velvet and Scotch ribbon mixed, hiding the ends of the feathers in front. That of the Comtesse de L. was of Leghorn or *Paille d'Italie*, the rim was turned downwards, a long white ostrich feather encircled the whole of the crown, and a bow of white satin ribbon was placed in front to hide the stem or bad end of the feather. The whole *toilette* was charming; and if in the description they appear too much like stage costumes, I can assure my readers that they did not look so; that, on the contrary, they were original, and exceedingly becoming.

I leave Etretât the day after to-morrow, not without regret, for my stay here has been very agreeable; but then, "*Que voulez vous?*" as our friends say. The "Grande entrée de l'Armée" takes place at Paris on the 14th, and I must not fail to give my fair lady-readers a correct account of that imposing ceremony.

The Paris newspapers for the last week contain really nothing that is worthy of reproduction. The *Figaro*, the witty (?) newspaper, is only saved from absolute silence and contempt this week by the following:—

TROUVÉ SUR LE COLLIER D'UN CHIEN PERDU.

On ne promet point de largesse
A celui qui me retrouvera,
Qui me ramène à ma maîtresse
Pour recompense il la verra.

For the benefit of those of my readers who do not know French, and not in the desire of being considered poetical, I have made the following humble translation:—

FOUND ON THE COLLAR OF A LOST DOG.

To him into whose hands I fall,
No filthy lucre will be offered;
Lead me to my lady's call,
A *view of her* to you is proffered.

LETTER XIV.

The Paris Fêtes.

Paris, Wednesday, August 17, 1859.

PARIS saw last Sunday as grand and imposing a ceremony as any upon which her brilliant noonday sun shone in days of yore. Eighty thousand soldiers, conducted by the Emperor, who guided them in the combat, made their entry into the Capital under triumphal arches, under a rain of flowers and laurels, and in the midst of the most enthusiastic acclamations of that most enthusiastic of all people—the French. As early as seven o'clock on Sunday morning, the crowd on the Boulevards was overwhelming. Hundreds of persons had passed Saturday night on the pavement, so as to be sure of having good places. The Boule-



vards, the Rue de la Paix, the Rue Castiglione, and the Rue de Rivoli, offered a most striking appearance. Banners, flags, of all nations—the tricolour predominating,—floated from the top of all the public buildings, the theatres, and from every private house; the windows of these latter having been let at the most fabulous prices. The National Guard formed a *haie* on the right-hand side of the Boulevards, from the Bastille to the Place Vendôme. Here they stopped, but began again at the Rue Castiglione, the line continuing to the Tuileries. The troops of the army of Paris were in full parade dress, the troops of the army of Italy in campaign *tenue*. At nine o'clock, salvos of artillery announced the arrival of the Emperor at the Place de la Bastille, where his Majesty was received by his Excellency Marshal Magnan, at the head of his *état major*. The head of the army had already arrived, and after a march of an hour entered the Place Vendôme. All along the Boulevards the Emperor was received with the greatest enthusiasm. His Majesty, who walked his horse the whole distance, was literally inundated with flowers. Perhaps never has a victorious sovereign, entering his capital, met with a more flattering reception. The Marshals commanding the different *corps d'armée*, the superior officers, subalterns, and soldiers, had each his bouquet or his laurel wreath thrown from the hand of some fair lady on the Boulevards.

But by far the best point for witnessing this imposing ceremony was on the *estrades* built in the Place Vendôme. Let me attempt to describe the general appearance of this square. At the side of the Rue de la Paix four columns formed a sort of triumphal gate. These immense columns had a base of (imitation) white marble with blue veins; the upper portion represented red marble with a gold cornice. There

are eight of these columns, each of which is surmounted by a gilt statue of Victory with out-stretched hands offering crowns of golden laurels with each hand. This same decoration is repeated at the entrance of the Place Vendôme by the Rue de Castiglione. Inside the Place, crimson velvet hangings, embroidered with the Imperial bees and the letter N, were suspended from each story of the houses round the square. Golden eagles with outspread wings were ranged at regular intervals on the roofs, while tricolour flags and medallions with the Imperial cypher completed the decoration. The Tribune occupied by the Empress in front of the residence of the *Garde des Sceaux* was ornamented in the niches by trophies, while the inside was decorated with the national flags. A large tent of crimson velvet striped with gold and supported by golden lances, protected the Empress first from the sun, and afterwards from the rain which fell towards the close of the ceremony. Around the Place were raised rows of benches capable of seating twenty thousand spectators. These benches were entirely draped with crimson velvet with gold fringe, and when filled with beautifully-dressed ladies and gentlemen, many of these last in uniform, the brilliant spectacle reminded one of a Roman amphitheatre on a day of triumph. The fine column composed of bronze, surmounted by the statue of the first Napoleon, was ornamented with garlands of every description, flags, banners, and wreaths of *immortelles*.

At a quarter-past ten, the military band stationed at the entrance of the Place Vendôme executed the national air of "Partant pour la Syrie," and four gala carriages entered the square; the first containing the Empress and the Prince Impérial. Her Majesty wore a white dress with a black lace mantle, and a Leghorn bonnet ornamented with feathers of



the national colours. The little Prince wore the costume of the Grenadiers of the Guard. The Princess Mathilde wore a mauve silk dress and a white crape bonnet. At half-past ten a low murmur announced the approach of the Emperor and the army. All the spectators rose, while the band played the well-known air of "La Victoire est à nous." The *cortège* was composed thus : The brass band of the Cent Gardes, the Cent Gardes in full dress ; The Etat Major of the army of Italy ; the Emperor on horseback, his sword drawn, wearing the uniform of a General, with the grand cordon of the Legion of Honour. His Majesty was received with long and continued cheers and cries of "Vive l'Empereur." After saluting the Empress, his Majesty stationed himself in front of the Imperial Tribune, having on one side of him Marshal Pelissier, and on the other Marshal Randon. At sight of the troops, the Prince Impérial stood upon his chair and drew his little sword with infantine enthusiasm. The defile commenced immediately after the arrival of the Emperor; the wounded soldiers, with priests at their sides, came first. The Emperor saluted these brave soldiers, who, in spite of their evident pain and debility, cried loudly "Vive l'Empereur." One young officer was specially remarked; both his hands had been carried away by the same ball; his arms were entirely enveloped in white wrappings ; but the pain he must have been enduring continually did not prevent a smile playing on his pale face, as he saluted by a bend of the body, and shouted "Vive l'Impératrice." The band of wounded was fortunately small, for their appearance created a saddening impression upon the crowd. I shall not mention the name of every regiment that passed, but merely speak of the ceremony of presenting the flags to the Emperor by the regiments of the Guard. The 3rd Grenadiers, whose flag is so riddled

that it no longer deserves the name of flag, was received with great enthusiasm, the Empress and Prince Impérial joining in the applause. In fact, the young Prince kept up a continual clapping of hands till he left, which was before the close of the ceremony. I am sure those little members of his Imperial body must have been sadly red and tired. I observed, that when the soldiers cried "Vive le Prince Impérial," his Highness's English nurse whispered to him, whereupon he immediately answered by the military salute. The regiments of the Guard, on arriving in front of the Emperor, halted; the standard-bearer advanced in front of His Majesty, who uncovered while a Cent Garde took the flags. Those belonging to the Imperial Guard are all kept in the Palace of the Tuileries. The appearance of the Austrian flags, carried by the persons who took them, caused long, loud, and reiterated shouts from all present. Forty Austrian cannons also caused universal satisfaction. Marshal de Mac Mahon, Duc de Magenta, was received with maddening shouts of approval. This brave soldier looked well in his uniform; he wore the kepi. In passing at the head of his division, General Forey threw at the feet of the Emperor, and at the tribune of the Empress, the flowers and crowns that had been showered upon him *en route*. It was a delicate attention, and was received by the Empress with a gracious salute of the head, a wave of the handkerchief, and, above all, one of her sweetest smiles. A gentleman behind me said that "that smile was reward enough for the fatigues of a two years' campaign." Her Majesty is really beautiful, and her smile—especially when her face is radiant with excitement—reminds one of the heavenly smiles of Raphael's Virgins. About one o'clock the rain began to fall, and many of the ladies who cared more for the preservation of their toilettes than for the rest of

the ceremony, left. These were few, the majority remaining till the end. During the passage of the 4th corps, the Empress sent the Prince Impérial to the Emperor, who lifting him in his arms, placed him on the saddle, where he remained for several moments. The *cortége* terminated by the cavalry, a very fine corps. In passing before the Emperor these regiments halted also, and presented their mutilated flags to the Emperor, who, at the close of the ceremony, bowed to the Empress and rode to the Palace, preceded by the Cent Gardes on horseback carrying the French and Austrian flags, and followed by the marshals and the military household. The crowd stationed near the Palace made the air ring with their shouts. The Empress with her household followed in carriages.

It may be interesting here to give some idea of the appearance of the Boulevards. At the Barrière du Trone two gilt masts, festooned together with a garland of laurel leaves, rivalled in height the two columns which bear the statues of St. Louis and Philippe Auguste. From the top of these masts floated green banners, embroidered with gold stars. A large tower was built in the centre of the place, on the base of which were written the names of the principal battles of the late conflict. On the Place de la Bastille was erected the handsomest temporary ornament of the city. It was a triumphal arch, and offered by the city to the Emperor and army. This arch represents the grand entrance to the world-renowned cathedral of Milan, and is said to be exact in all its details. Another triumphal arch in front of the Cirque Napoleon was charming in its simplicity. It was of magnificent Moorish construction, and surmounted by an immense golden eagle, on whose outspread wings were written, "A Napoleon III., à l'armée d'Italie. Vive

l'Empereur!" All the theatres had decorated their façades in a style of fabulous magnificence. At the Rue Lepelletier, another arch, on the base of which were written Cæsar's famous words, "Veni, vidi, vici," also "Zurich—Villafranca." I find it is quite impossible to describe this scene.

I might, it is true, enumerate every triumphal arch, but the profusion of flags floating from all the windows, from the trees, and suspended by long cords which stretched across the street, produced an effect of which words fail to convey any idea. The scene on the Boulevards can be compared to nothing but an immense theatre, the public being the spectators, and the victorious army the actors.

I may here mention that, as usual, the most exhorbitant prices were asked for all places, and the consequence was, that not an inch of ground was to be seen on which were not placed chairs and benches; many of the shopkeepers took down their windows and erected seats as in a circus. That portion of the population who had not money to buy places, or, if they had money, could not throw it away, sacrificed their time, their sleep, and their eating, for those who had not brought their food with them, found it impossible to get out, and thus were starved as well as sleepless.

The next day (the 15th), which, besides being the *fête* of the first and consequently of the third Napoleon, was also the day of the Assumption, and thus had double cause for being celebrated. The weather during the early part of the day looked menacing, but as then all Paris was in church, and the afternoon was fine, there was no complaining. A salvo of artillery at six o'clock in the morning announced that the *fête* had commenced, and shortly afterwards provisions and alms were freely distributed in all the different Mairies in the Capital. During the whole day, crowds visited the Place Vendôme to



view the beautiful decorations. About ten o'clock, a number of soldiers of the First Empire, dressed in their peculiar old uniform, walked to the column in the Place Vendôme, and deposited, according to their yearly custom, crowns of *immortelles* on the railing which surrounds it. A solemn *Te Deum* was celebrated at Notre Dame, in presence of the Emperor, Empress, and Great Bodies of States. Religious services of a similar character were also celebrated with great pomp in all the other churches of Paris. At the conclusion of the religious services the crowd in the streets became dense, although the gratuitous representations in the different theatres carried away thousands. The line of persons stationed before each of these places of amusement extended through several different streets, and to the credit of the people be it said, that there was not the slightest attempt at pushing or crowding to get in first. The pieces selected were the very best of each theatre's *répertoire*, and it is said that the performers exerted themselves to the utmost; for it is universally acknowledged that the *classe ouvrière* of Paris has an instinctive appreciation of dramatic excellence.

At one o'clock a tilting match took place on the Seine, the vanquished having the pleasure of a cool bath in the river, to the intense delight of the spectators. But by far the densest crowds were collected on the Esplanade of the Invalides, where a variety of amusements were provided for the people. Two theatres for gymnastic exercises, and two for military pantomimes, were erected here. Greased poles, with silver cups, watches, handsome pipes, &c.—these prizes dangling temptingly from the top—were there to induce ambitious persons to try to climb them. Shows of all sorts, from gigantic babies to tamed lions, were to be entered for the moderate fee of two sous. An immense number of

soldiers were amusing themselves here—as, in fact, they seemed to be doing all over the city. The military pantomimes carried the day over all the other shows of the Esplanade. You can easily imagine that these pantomimes represented the French army in action, that action ultimately resulting in the success of the French arms; but what nation was to be defeated was the question which presented itself to all thinking minds. Austria is now at peace with France, Russia the same; the Arabs of Algeria have been killed, wounded, and taken prisoners, for many years on the Esplanade, but this year the number of Turcos wandering about effectually put a stop to that. Profiting by the entire absence of Chinese from the city, the ingenious organizer of these entertainments seized upon that nation to represent the vanquished foe, and it is estimated that some hundreds of Chinese were entirely routed by a handful of French about twenty times in the course of the day, to the intense delight of the assembled multitude. At six o'clock in the evening another salvo of artillery announced that the day *fête* had terminated.

About eight o'clock, the great mass of human beings began to surge towards the Place de la Concorde. The weather, refreshed by the morning's shower, was delightfully cool, and being quite dry, was admirably suited for a display of fireworks. The garden of the Tuileries was illuminated in a style of fantastic magnificence. The reserved garden was thrown open to the public. This garden was hung all round with lights representing precious stones, diamonds, rubies, and pearls. The *grande allée*, leading to the time-honoured Palace, was festooned with garlands of light. About nine o'clock, the Emperor and Empress appeared on the balcony dressed in evening attire. Their appearance was the signal

for loud cheers, which they acknowledged by repeated salutations. After remaining about five minutes on the balcony, their Majesties retired amid the renewed cheers of the crowd. Immediately after, the display of fireworks commenced, as usual, by a brilliant flight of sky rockets, which, on bursting, exposed to view the national colours of France and Piedmont —blue, white, and red, for the one, and blue, white, and green, for the other. After those came a piece representing fourteen cascades, each having a revolving motion and throwing out a profusion of liquid fire, which at intervals changed colour, and produced a charming effect. The next piece represented a fall of water on a most gigantic scale, the extent being not less than 250 yards in length. While this was playing, showers of detonating bombs and Roman candles of every imaginable tinge of colour were discharged, while the sky was filled with repeated flights of rockets. Next appeared four triumphal columns in various coloured fires, two of them surmounted by stars and two by eagles. The grand *pièce de résistance* was in the shape of a façade of a Temple of Peace, forty yards high by sixty in width. On the right and left were military trophies and flags, and between them escutcheons bearing the names of the victories of the Allies in Italy. The exhibition closed by the bouquet, for the execution of which it could almost be imagined that Ruggieri, who, as usual, furnished the display, had borrowed the use of Mount Vesuvius, and substituted for the flames and lava the countless thousands of brilliant lights which filled the air, and drew forth such loud applause.

This amusement over, the crowd dispersed to view the illuminations, which had now become genéral. The Champs Elysées were beautifully hung with Chinese lamps of every hue. The Place de la Concorde was a blaze of white stars,



placed at regular distances. The Ministry of Marine, of Foreign Affairs, and Legislative Chamber, were all richly illuminated. The Hotel de Ville was a perfect blaze of light and the double row of gas the whole length of the Rue de Rivoli produced a charming effect. I cannot enumerate the different buildings, which, by the tasteful arrangement of flags, streamers, and gas, added to the beauty of the scene but can only say that the *fêtes* of the 14th and 15th August will long live in the memory of Parisians as two days of unqualified magnificence and rejoicing, not marred by a single accident to any of the great human mass which filled the streets of this brilliant capital.

LETTER XV.

Paris after the Fêtes — Movements of the Court—A Modest Dressmaker's Bill—A Good Example—The Theatrical and Operatic World—A Romantic Story—Singular Law Suit—Paris Improvements—The State Carriage of Napoleon I.—Hazarding an Opinion.

Paris, Wednesday, August 24, 1859.

How changed the aspect of the City since my last letter! The triumphal arches, monuments, flags, and victory poles, which sprang up in a single night as if by enchantment, now seem to have disappeared in the same manner, for not a vestige of the decorations for the *fête de l'Empereur* is now to be seen. The immense crowd of strangers, English predominating, which invaded the streets for several days before and after the ceremony, has vanished so suddenly, that one might almost imagine they but came to act as accessories to the

brilliancy of the rejoicings, and that the general manager-in-chief, having no further use for them, has quickly sent them about their business. The Rues de la Paix and Castiglione were the rendezvous for an immense number of artists, who, anxious to commit to the never-dying canvas the decorations for the triumphal *entrée* of the army, stationed themselves there in full view of the Place Vendôme. In addition to their being good painters, which I hope they were, I can certify to the amount of patience they all displayed; for the crowd of *gamins* who never left the elbows of the artists all day long, and who did not hesitate to pass an opinion favourable or otherwise on the progressing picture, must have been enough to try the patience of a saint; but they withstood the desire to give up the task in despair, and I saw several artists carrying away triumphantly their completed works. The beautiful statue representing Peace, which stood at the entrance of the Rue de la Paix, has been taken down, and will be carefully preserved.

The Emperor and Empress are taking the baths at St. Sauveur; the Imperial Prince has proceeded to Biarritz, where he will be joined by their Majesties in about ten days' time. It is said that the Grand-Duke Constantine has taken the Hotel des Ambassadeurs at Biarritz, which is now being prepared for his Imperial Highness and suite. Preparations for the reception of the Emperor Napoleon and his fair Consort are being made in a style of unusual magnificence at Bayonne, the place at which the railway stops, and passengers *en route* for Biarritz take the diligence. Their Majesties are expected to arrive during the night, and consequently the whole town will be brilliantly illuminated. The preparations ordered at the Palace of Compiègne are fast approaching completion; the Imperial family finish the season at this

picturesque spot. As is the custom, their Majesties will entertain a large number of guests, who are divided into sets—one set stopping one week, the second the second week, &c. There is always great curiosity among the *haute noblesse* of Paris when this season approaches, and the Marquise D—— is dying of envy if she hears that the Baroness de C—— is invited; even now, the fashionable dressmakers are loaded with orders from ladies who imagine they will be invited to Compiègne.

As I gazed yesterday at the immense number of dresses made for a certain lady here, who, even if she is honoured with an invitation, will only stop a week, I thought to what a ridiculous extent dressing is carried by French ladies, even those whose fortunes do not warrant it. This lady had ordered nineteen dresses for her one week (that is her hoped-for week) at Compiègne. Averaging each dress at twenty pounds, which is Roger's average price, we attain the nice little sum of three hundred and eighty pounds; then there are of course other, and equally necessary things, such as gloves, *lingerie*, &c. Rather a dear week's pleasure, take it all in all! The dreadful extravagances of the ladies going constantly to Court has reached the Emperor's ears, and it is said that he specially desired the Empress to set the example of great simplicity to ladies surrounding her Majesty. This, it is said, the beautiful Eugénie does as much as possible; it is not uncommon to hear her pointed out by a Parisian to some country cousin as being of her ladies "Celle qui est habillée le plus simplement," which is often the case.

The weather is cool and pleasant, but Paris looks very deserted; the *beau monde* has gone to its *chateaux*, and the strangers—everywhere: they will not remain in Paris during the dull season. The theatres are making spasmodic

attempts to attract the public by the offering of novelties in the way of fairy pieces, theatrical reviews, &c. They succeed in getting full houses, but the audience is composed, even at the Français, of persons of the lower class. Refined people look upon theatricals as a winter amusement, and will not patronise them in summer. All the principal actors and actresses are now *en congé*. Bonnebie, the favourite barytone, has returned to the Grand Opera. A romantic story is being told of a young actress who made her *débût* at the Théatre du Palais Royal about a year ago. Although but seventeen years of age, and possessed of extraordinary beauty, the young aspirant for dramatic honours did not make a very favourable impression. A wealthy Moldavian who had just lost his wife, visited the theatre, and saw in the *débûtante* an exact likeness of his departed spouse. Love succeeded astonishment, and the gentleman demanded her hand; her parents were agreeable, and the marriage was celebrated last week in the presence of the gentleman's aristocratic friends. The best part of the story is that the young lady is of highly respectable parents, although very poor; the bridegroom with a snug fortune of 60,000f. a year will, no doubt, render the happiness of the whole family complete. Musard's concerts are becoming the rage; in fact, what can be more agreeable, during the hot weather, than to sit in the midst of fragrant flowers whose perfume fills the air, while the renowned band of this most renowned leader "discourses most excellent music." The strict measures taken to prevent the entrance of improper characters renders it a place of reunion for highly respectable families, while English and American visitors flock there in abundance.

A very novel law suit is about to be brought upon the *tapis*. The facts of the case are these: the mortal remains of

the celebrated Cardinal de Richelieu were deposited in the Chapelle de la Sorbonne (the fine tomb erected to his memory may still be seen); but during one of the most terrible days of the Revolution, the insurgents broke open this sacred place of rest as unceremoniously as they did those of persons of higher and lower degree. This act of Vandalism perpetrated, the unfeeling mob drew out the remains of the famous Cardinal, and, severing the head from the body, paraded it upon a lance's point through all the principal streets of the town, and amidst the cries and jeers of the excited multitude, delivered it up to one of the principal citizens of the town who favoured the revolutionary cause. This good man left the head of the poor Cardinal to his son, who attaches an immense value to it. The object of the suit will be to force the gentleman to give up his cherished head, as it is contended that the remains of an illustrious man belong to the State. Whether the gentleman will remain in undisturbed possession, or whether the State will win the cause, remains to be seen.

Napoleon I. has been called the King-maker; I herewith solemnly dub Napoleon III. with the title of Street-maker—a more useful, though less grand-sounding name. Though 'tis but a month since I left Paris, I can see in all directions the most decided and useful improvements; streets being cut through, old houses torn down, and new ones replacing them, and similar improvements in every part of the city. In the vicinity of the Rue du Cherche-Midi, five new large broad streets are being cut through; fine large houses will line either side of these new boulevards. The great importance of this will be understood when I call to the minds of my readers the fact that the Rue du Cherche-Midi is the street which contains all the convents, nunneries, &c., and though really very near the



Faubourg St. Germain, that densely habited neighbourhood, up to the present time the street itself has been so difficult of access (owing to the fact of no cross-streets traversing it), that it has been a place of security for the nuns, monks, &c. I do not doubt that the Emperor's order for the cutting of these streets was an unpopular movement among this class of people. Though French priests may cavil at it, the free and liberty-loving English people will applaud heartily this breaking up of a deeply rooted and essentially pernicious system.

A general examination of schools and distribution of prizes has been taking place within the past week. Boys and girls laden with crowns, handsomely bound books, and other rewards of merit, may be seen at any hour of the day walking home triumphantly, accompanied by the proud and happy parents. The vacation of the 15th of August has now freed these little people from the arduous tasks of the year.

It is well known that the magnificent state carriage used by the First Emperor and his wronged consort Josephine, while in Italy, has passed into the hands of the Duchess of Parma. This carriage attracted the attention of Prince Napoleon, during his late command of the Army of Observation; and it is said that his Imperial Highness expressed a desire to purchase what had been the property of his uncle. This reached the ears of the Duchess, who has begged the Emperor's acceptance of it. Though the answer has not yet been announced, I do not hesitate to state, on the assurance of persons in position to know, that the Emperor will refuse this act of courtesy on the part of her Royal Highness. His Majesty's reasons, I of course ignore; but if he is as gallant as report makes him, it must cost him a pang to refuse an act of *gracieuseté*, when coming from a lady.

The reserved garden of the Tuileries is now open to the

public, and those who grumbled the most at this piece of ground being taken from the public, are now loudest in its praise. Take them all in all, the opinion of your correspondent is, that the French are the hardest people to govern in the world; and if their present Sovereign sometimes does things which we do not approve of, we must remember that his subjects are not free-thinking English people. Shakspeare said, "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown;" and though the great bard intended that for one of the Henry's, the remark is painfully applicable to French monarchs.

LETTER XVI.

Paris Amusements—The Angel of Charity—The Princess Clotilde —A Clownish Prince—An Amusing Mistake—Gallant Zouaves—The Imperial Family at St. Sauveur.

Paris, Wednesday, August 31, 1859.

THE weather has suddenly become so cool and delightful, that for the last few days the Champs Elysées have presented so gay and brilliantly-dressed assembly of promenaders that one could almost fancy oneself in the middle of winter, when all the fashionables are in town. The theatres, too, are fuller, and are attended by a better class of persons than for the last two or three months. The managers of these different places of amusement have hastily brought out novelties to please, and some of the pieces presented lately are noticeable for their originality and wit. At the Gymnase, the Empress's favourite theatre, they have produced a three act comedy called *Un Ange de Charité*, which is a beautifully-conceived and equally well carried out plot, the whole of the dialogue

being in rhyme. Though this style of play is rather in disfavour at the present time, yet the author of the *Ange de Charité* may well be proud of his success. The Angel of Charity is not a creature of the ideal world; it is a woman of the *monde*, who, in spite of all the false-heartedness and frivolity which surround her, is noble enough not to practice the baseness and selfishness of her friends, and to unostentatiously relieve many an aching heart and suffering frame. Pauline is a widow, young, handsome, rich, and has many suitors; she does not wish to marry again, but it is necessary that her little son should have a father's hand to guide him. The two most serious aspirants for her hand are called, one George de Biron, a young fop, who, having run through all his own fortune, is desirous of replenishing his coffers with the widow's; the other, Durozeau, an old solicitor, who wishes to put an end to the hopes of a list of nieces and nephews, who each separately count on being his heir or heiress. Pauline has been very kind to a young man who gives lessons to her child, and who in the *dénouement* proves himself worthy of the compassion she has shown him. This is a beautiful portraiture of that unhappily large class of human beings to whom education and gentle birth are misfortunes, for they prevent their possessors asking alms when they need it. Pauline asks George and Durozeau to find a place for Edmond d'Albert, her *protégé*, but these two kind-hearted beings refuse, and the young man subsists on the lessons given to Pauline's child; but scandal is at work, and Pauline feels that she must take from him this last hope. The most impressive scene in the play is that in which Edmond declares to his benefactress that he has a secret to tell her, against which he has struggled for days, but which must be told. She tremblingly awaits the expected declaration of love which

must cause her to forbid him the house; but no—he asks an advance of money, he is on the point of starvation! The young actor who delivers these lines infused a vigour and warmth into them which completely carried the audience by storm. Of course it ends by Pauline marrying the young *protégé*, and the consequent utter defeat of M. de Biron and the old lawyer. Why is it that in England we cannot have such companies of good actors as in France? It is usual to have one or two very good ones, and then those who fill the minor characters are so poor that they often mar the best efforts of an experienced actor. In the *Ange de Charité* there is a ball-room appendage in the shape of a man, who does not utter a single word during the whole course of the piece; and yet, so admirably is he dressed, so perfect is he in his gestures, that his entrance is always marked with applause. Madame Vestvali makes her first appearance at the Grand Opera to-night in the character of Romeo; she will be greeted with enthusiasm, no doubt. All the theatres are organising their winter companies, and this season promises to be even more brilliant than the last.

The only member of the Imperial family now left in Paris is the Princess Clotilde; she drives out very quietly, having had the good sense to abandon the out-riders, postillions, &c., which the Princes Napoleon and Jérome so delight in. One wonders at her remaining in Paris the whole summer through—she has not even a villa outside the town—and during the hottest of the summer she remains either at the Palais Royal or their little place in the Avenue Montaigne. Many reports are circulated about herself and her Imperial husband being very unhappy together; but we must not place too much reliance on what Dame Rumour says, she is always busy with these great people; one cannot refrain from observing, how-

ever, that the Princess is extremely *distingué*, and her husband is—quite the contrary, shall I say? Yes, that is a very mild term. The time was, and that not many years ago, when the name prince and gentleman were synonymous terms; now, *au contraire.* I don't think any *gentleman* would ride through the streets of Paris in an Imperial *calèche* with a cigar in his mouth and a straw hat stuck rakishly on the front of his head, his legs (don't be shocked, ladies, it is quite true) stretched out on the front seat, and his arm thrown over the back of the carriage! Yet *Princes* do these things. It is a pity that the Emperor Napoleon is obliged to acknowledge such relations. No one can say that his Majesty is not as dignified a Sovereign as ever held a sceptre, or that the Empress is not a fitting consort.

While I am on this subject, perhaps you will allow me to recount an amusing adventure, which, though it happened some months ago, can never have been told, as there was no one present but the principal actors in it, and your correspondent. The scene passed at the house of one of the most fashionable dressmakers in Paris. In the *grand salon* silks and other materials were lying on the table, and when I entered there was a lady present who was choosing some dresses. I immediately recognized Lady C., having been introduced to her a few evenings before. She also remembered me, and bowing, she begged me to kindly give her some advice as to the silks she was choosing, professing not to be a *connoisseuse* in French *marchandise.* While we were examining the different patterns, in burst an enormous fat lady (?), who began upbraiding the dressmaker for a delay in sending home some dress or another. "*Sapristi,*" exclaimed the newcomer, "if this occurs again no more of my custom—and the dress, how does it fit, now that it is sent home? Look"



—and, taking off her shawl, she exposed to view a dress laced up the back, with about an inch of something white, which should have been hidden, shewing behind—" well, all I can say is, that *me voila ficelée comme un vrai jambon.*" This was too much for the aristocratic English lady, who, hastily dropping the silks, left the room followed by the dressmaker. "Have the goodness to send my bill immediately; had I known that you were in the habit of making dresses for *such* persons, I should never have come to you." The poor dressmaker looked frightened, then bewildered, then smiled complacently. "I understand your ladyship's mistake," said she "*et vraiment ce n'est pas étonnant que Madame l'ait pensé;* but," here she lowered her voice, "*c'est la Princesse B., cousine de l'Empereur.* Lady C. burst into a fit of uncontrollable laughter at her mistake, and reassured the dressmaker by saying she would still patronize her, but begged to be put into another room when the Princess B. came. The truth of this I can vouch for, as I was present during the whole proceeding. I have seen the Princess frequently since, and always think of her comparing herself to what she in reality so much resembled—a *jambon.*

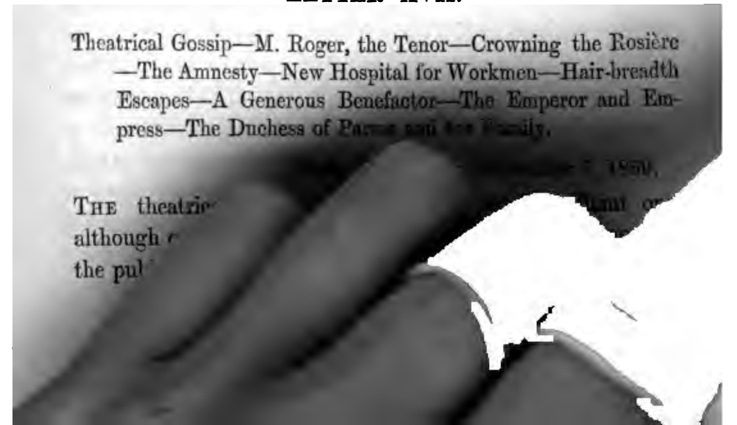
The Turcos having been already sent off to Algeria, the Zouaves remain the undisputed recipients of all the admiring glances from the nursery-maids, while their beautiful uniforms and dashing manners attract the attention of all the strangers now in the city. By the Parisians they are regarded as something more than human—both in the battle-field and also as avengers of right. A curious exemplification of this took place a few days ago at a little town near Paris. It happened to be the *fête patronale* of the town. Had I known such to be the case, I should certainly have declined the invitation to dine with my friend who lives there; but I was



unaware of it, and after dinner, unheeding the flight of time as we read aloud alternately the fashionable intelligence in the last *Lady's Newspaper*, I was suddenly reminded by the striking of the clock that it was eleven exactly, and that the last train left at a quarter past. We made our *adieux* quickly, and were soon at the railway station. But what a crowd—men, women, and children, soldiers and dogs all mixed up indiscriminately, and making noise enough to cause one to imagine it was "Bedlam" let loose. As is usual in France, the doors of the *gare* or *dépôt* are kept fast locked till the official thinks fit to open them. Everybody was pushing to get near the door, as it was rumoured that there would not be room enough in the train for all the persons desirous of returning to Paris. Of course, in this as in all other crowds, our poor sex got the worst of it; two ladies near me were so crushed by the horrid men who wished to get in front of them, that the gentleman who was their *cavalier*, cried out, "Ici les Zouaves; on maltraite les dames." At this appeal, the Zouaves, who formed a large portion of the assembly, sprang forward, and then began such a skirmish as I had never seen before, and hope never to see again. The active little soldiers soon forced from the door all men unaccompanied by females, and forming themselves in a *haie* down either side of the waiting-room to the door, one called out, "All ladies alone, or gentlemen with ladies, may now pass out—men alone keep back." And in this manner we passed out quietly, leaving our heroic guard of honour to bring up the rear. In all the military pieces that are played, it is always the Zouaves who are the heroes—it was the Zouaves who were received with the greatest enthusiasm the day of the *entrée* of the troops. In fact, the Zouaves are the regiments *par excellence* of the French army.

The Emperor and Empress are still at St. Sauveur taking the baths. Much apprehension has been caused in Paris among the admirers of Her Majesty by the fact of the Emperor's announcing in answer to a request that their Majesties should visit Pau, that "the Empress's health had been so much affected by the various emotions she had lately undergone, that she required extraordinary attention, and that he thought their medical advisers would not consent to her Majesty's visiting Pau." I suppose the Emperor's object in saying this is, that he wishes repose, and not receptions, balls, &c., at St. Sauveur. Her Majesty is winning the hearts of the country people, it appears, by her sympathy with them and unbounded generosity. It is said that their Majesties take long walks daily without the slightest state, mixing and talking freely to the people, and often visiting their cottages to see that they are comfortably lodged. How commendable this is; I am sure the whole English nation, for this one act alone, will unite with the French in the cry of "Vive l'Empereur."

LETTER XVII.



Theatrical Gossip—M. Roger, the Tenor—Crowning the Rosière—The Amnesty—New Hospital for Workmen—Hair-breadth Escapes—A Generous Benefactor—The Emperor and Empress—The Duchess of

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In my last letter I announced to you that Madame Vestvali was to make her *débût* as Romeo, but a series of unforeseen accidents have occurred to prevent the giving of the piece. In the first place, Madame Gueymard asked for a *congé* of two days; it was impossible to refuse, as this *artiste* has sung without cessation, through the whole summer. Then Madame Vestvali was indisposed; and afterwards, the Russian *danseuse*, Mdle. Zina, sprained her ankle. In spite of all this they promise *Roméo et Juliette* this evening, but I should not be surprised if it were again put off. At the Opera Comique *La Pagode* is still retarded by the indisposition of Mdle. Bousquet. In the meantime they are giving some amusing one act trifles, and the promise of Montaubry in *Le Songe d'une Nuit d'Eté*, the operatic *Midsummer Night's Dream.* The Odéon, the Ambigu Comique, and the Theatre Lyrique all opened the same night. Without Mdme. Miolan Carvalho the Lyrique presents little charm; so I will speak more at length of this theatre when that *artiste* makes her appearance. The Italiens, though not opening before the 1st of October, has already given a list of its company. The worshipped Mario's name is not to be found on the programme, but we are to have Tamberlik for six weeks, and Gardoni after to be Mario's *remplacant*, so we do not much complain, especially as the female *artistes*' names comprise those of Mesdames Penco, Borghimamo, Alboni, Cambardi, and Dottini, with the excellent buffo Zucchini, the favourite barytone Badiali, and Graziani and Merly. Altogether the season promises to be an excessively brilliant one. The little theatre of the Bouffes Parisiens is making extraordinary exertions for the production of novelties. They are rehearsing a piece called *Geneviève de Brabant*, which includes all the talent of the company, and promises to be something

extraordinary in a musical way. Facilities are afforded to correspondents to *assister* at the rehearsals, but I prefer waiting for the opening night; sitting in a dark miserable theatre for two or three hours on a beautiful sunshiny day, to see an imperfect rendering of (often) a bad piece, is far from agreeable.

The most devoted friends of Roger, the unfortunate tenor who has just lost his arm from the accidental discharge of his gun, could not have hoped for a more speedy recovery than he has had. He has been leaving his bed to dine with his family for the last week; another week will see him completely cured. The Grand Opera has not ceased for a day his monthly salary of 6,000f. (400*l*); in addition to this some friends of the artist are occupying themselves with getting up two or three concerts for his benefit; but Roger wishes to sing at them, therefore they cannot take place immediately. Charrière, a celebrated man in his way, is making a mechanical arm for the singer, which it is said is nearer perfection than anything yet invented. There is a rumour that a subscription is being quietly raised, and that the night of the first concert Roger will receive one of Tahan's most beautiful pocket-books, containing a considerable sum. I hope it does not seem unkind; but really, here is a man who owns a magnificent property near Paris, who is not incapacitated from pursuing his vocation, who has a fine salary coming in continually, and yet he is to be presented with money! Well, human nature will always be thus, I suppose.

The peculiarly French ceremony of crowning the Rosière took place last Saturday at Surenes, a little village near Paris. Most of my readers are aware, no doubt, that the Rosière is the name given to the young girl who has conducted herself

the best during the year. It is an ancient custom, and a much more imposing one than I imagined. The town presented all the appearance of a *fête*, the villagers being dressed out in their holiday clothes, and all work being suspended. The church was handsomely decorated for the occasion, and the Archbishop of Paris presided. A seat covered with red velvet was placed for *Monseigneur*, and a platform for the Mayor and Municipal Council. Opposite the latter were seats for the competitors for the prize, and also chairs for the descendants of the Countess Desbassyns de Richemont, who in 1804, endowed the Commune with a *rente* for the re-establishment of the ceremony. Baron Hausmann, Prefect of the Seine, was also present. Divine service having been performed, and a very impressive and appropriate sermon delivered by the Abbé Duguerry, of the Madeleine, the name of the successful candidate was announced to be Prudence Ameline. The blushing young girl having received the benediction of the Archbishop, was led to the present Countess de Desbassyns, who placed the crown of white roses on the head, which act involves the gift of a *dot* or dowry, on the day of the marriage. The other candidates received presents of handsomely-bound books. The Rosière was then conducted back to the Mairie, and the company departed. It is an excellent custom, an incentive being thus given to good behaviour; and though, perhaps, it is teaching young girls to do right, not for right's sake, but for that of being the Rosière, it is better than not to do right at all. The young girl was pretty, and seemed modest. It was said that Baron Hausmann made her a munificent present.

The Minister of the Interior has addressed a circular to the different Prefects, calling their attention to the necessity of promptly executing the amnesty. Persons in prison for

political offences are not only to be set at liberty, but to those who require it pecuniary assistance will be given to return to the places where they intend to reside. The magnanimity of this act deserves laudation.

The French are not usually considered a generous people, but it is a fact that many of their institutions are founded on very benevolent principles, and indicate a noble spirit of sympathy for the unfortunate and the poor. Some time ago a new eleemosynary institution was inaugurated here. It consists of a large and commodious retreat, which is intended for the residence of workmen recovering from the diseases of which they have been cured in the city hospitals, but who require more or less time for a perfect re-establishment of their health. This new hospital is endowed with fifty acres of ground, laid out in walks and grass plots, and decorated with fountains and running water. It has long corridors for promenades during rainy weather, and is in every way adapted to the reception of invalids able to move about. The initiative of this great establishment was taken by the Emperor, the State paying the greater part of the expense, and the city the remainder. About 500 persons can be received at once, and it is computed that the number of invalids who will annually be received will amount to 6,000.

It was the general remark of young Englishmen coming to Paris during the war, that the most fashionable *cercle*—the Jockey Club—was almost deserted. The reason is that many of its members, officers in the army, had been sent off to join their regiments in Italy. Many of the most noble and *spirituel* were doomed, alas! never to return to their favourite place of *réunion*—two gentlemen, however, the Count de la Rochfoucauld and the Viscount de Talon, escaped death in a miraculous way. The former charging the

Austrian cavalry received five wounds and was made prisoner. None of the wounds were mortal, but one of them was caused in a very extraordinary manner; a hulan placed his pistol close to the Count's forehead and pulled the trigger, but the ball, instead of shattering his scull, went round the frontal bone, tearing off the skin, and making its escape into empty space, causing a hole in the kepi. As to M. Talon, whilst charging at the head of the company at Solferino, he arrived in an Austrian square, and received a discharge of balls, which, however, only wounded his horse without touching him. The horse fell, but the rider jumped, sword in hand, and presently had his kepi cut through by a sword; a moment after he received a second blow on the head, but in the confusion, the soldier hit him with the flat of the sword. Finally M. Talon received a thrust from a bayonet, which threw him to the ground; but the soldier who gave it was astonished to see him rise and get away. The soldier thought, no doubt, that the young officer had some talisman about him; and so he had. During the campaign in the Crimea, M. Talon complained that he had broken the glass of his watch, and could not get it replaced. A soldier overhearing him, said, "Lieutenant, give me a piece of two francs, and I will put in a glass that will never break." The man, who was a watchmaker by trade, took the two-franc piece, and beating it out till it became large enough, skilfully fixed it into the place usually occupied by the glass. The watch, then, was on one side gold and on the other silver. On his return to France, M. Talon continued to wear the watch as a souvenir of the Crimea; he had it in his pocket at the battle of Solferino, and it was against it that the point of the Austrian's bayonet struck. The thrust was such a violent one, that the point of the bayonet passed through both coin

and watch. "Thus," said M. Talon, in recounting the affair, "I owe my life to a two-franc piece." A gentleman present remarked, that he considered the money exceedingly well invested; and so it was, for it has preserved to France a brave soldier, and to his family a worthy scion of a noble house.

The *Moniteur* publishes the following note from the general administration of public assistance:—

"Lord Seymour, who lately died in Paris, disposed of his fortune by a will, according to the terms of which he has constituted several charitable institutions of Paris and London, conjointly, his universal legatees. He has, moreover, decided that the portion of that fortune which is to come to the establishments of Paris shall be employed in the purchase of landed property, not to be resold. It is the duty of the administration to point out to public gratitude the name of this generous benefactor, who, in thus sharing his property between the poor of Paris and of London, has contributed as much as was in his power to tighten the bonds which already so happily unite the two capitals of the civilised world."

The Emperor and Empress are still at St. Sauveur, enjoying the mountain air and thermal baths. It is said that this treatment has a wonderful effect upon the Empress's health. When the weather is bad her Majesty is conducted to the bath establishment in a sedan chair *à la* Marie Thérèse. They leave St. Sauveur the 10th inst., and on the night of the same day make a grand *entrée* into the town of Bayonne, which will be brilliantly illuminated for the occasion. Their Majesties will ride through the principal streets, and taking post-horses proceed to Biarritz, a ride of about an hour and a-half. On the 11th September, the King of the Belgians and the Emperor of the French will have an interview at Biarritz.

The Emperor is to leave Biarritz on the 13th, and proceed to the camp at Chalons. Some grand manœuvres will here take place under the eyes of the Emperor and the persons of distinction who are invited to witness them. The Empress and Imperial Prince will remain at Biarritz till after the raising of the camp, when the whole Imperial family will proceed to the Palace at Compiègne. The building has been undergoing repairs, and is now in all its pristine grandeur. The number of visitors, it is said, is unusally large.

A rumour has been flying about Paris to the effect that the Emperors Napoleon and Francis Joseph are soon to have another interview, and that a town in Switzerland will be chosen for the rendezvous. Speaking of Switzerland, it may be of interest to my readers to hear the account given by a gentleman just returned from that country, of taking passage on the same steamer with one of the deposed Italian Princesses. The writes says: "Scarcely had we taken our places on the deck, when we noticed at the other end of the seat a lady surrounded by a group of merry laughing children. She wore a straw hat without either ribbons or feathers, and a morning dress of extreme simplicity. It is impossible to imagine sweeter or more pleasing features, or more affable manners. That lady was the Duchess of Parma, on her way from Genoa to Friburg with her children and several attendants. The young Duke Robert, who appeared to be nine or ten years of age, contemplated the lake and mountains with a thoughtful air. His younger brother treated him with great deference, and I observed that he touched his hat whenever he spoke to him. The young Princesses had a most pleasing air of gentleness and good-nature. The youngest, a very pretty and lively child, amused herself by carrying her doll up and down the deck, and went every now

and then to whisper some great secret to her governess. Her brothers and sisters, part of the time, crowded round a juggler, admiring his dexterity, and purchasing a few trifles from him." The only point I have to cavil at in the above is the assertion of the Duchess's wearing a hat "without either ribbons or feathers." I dare say the unfortunate lady desires to be simple in her dress, but it is hardly possible that she would wear a hat without the slightest trimming. Only fancy, ladies, how horrible it would look! But we all know that the Duchess de Parma was Louise de Bourbon, and a French woman would never wear an untrimmed hat. This is perhaps an uncalled for addition to a pretty story; so for fear of meeting the disapprobation of my readers, I say *au revoir* till next week.

LETTER XVIII.

The Imperial Court—Interview between King Leopold and the Emperor—The Grand Opera and its Imperial Visitors—Present Aspect of Paris—A Yankee Duped—American Toadyism—An Awkward Mistake.

Paris, Wednesday, September 14, 1859.

THE Emperor and Empress left St. Sauveur at one o'clock on the afternoon of Sunday, and arrived at Tarbes at seven in the evening. Their Majesties alighted at the residence of M. Fould, where they passed the night. The next day they left for Bayonne, and thence to Biarritz. On the road to St. Sauveur the people assembled in crowds, and testified by their warm acclamations their gratitude for all the benefits

conferred by their Majesties on that part of the country. The reception at Bayonne was, it is said, one of great splendour; and peasants bearing torches were stationed along the whole route from Bayonne to Biarritz, to do honour to their sovereign. The Empress is said to have benefited in an astonishing manner by the thermal treatment of St. Sauveur. Her Majesty was extremely anxious to visit Pau, but the Emperor feared it would fatigue her, and so the Empress's desires cannot be gratified.

By telegraph we learn that the interview between King Leopold and the Emperor Napoleon, took place this morning. Of course, the subject of conversation is as yet unknown.

Madame Vestvali made her *début* last Wednesday, in *Roméo et Juliette.* Take the performance as a whole, it was a good one; and this *artiste* may consider she has made a hit. The *habitués* of the Grand Opera are not so fastidious as those of the Italiens. Prince Napoleon and the Princess Clotilde honoured the theatre on the night of Madame Vestvali's *début.* I had the good fortune to be in the very next *loge* to that of her Imperial Highness, and consequently had an excellent opportunity of scanning her. She has, what is very rare among French ladies, a beautiful complexion, and I honestly believe does not make use of any of the preparations for the skin with which Paris is filled. Her hair is light, rather inclined to be red; but her shoulders and neck are superb, and can vie successfully with those of the Empress. She is decidedly not pretty, having an overhanging brow, which makes her look ill-tempered. I observed Prince Napoleon carefully, and am happy to state, that apart from having a pair of gloves, whose cleanliness might have shocked an English gentleman's mind, he committed no other *gaucherie*—in fact, crossing his arms on the

velvet covered railing before him, his Imperial Highness's attention seemed engrossed during the whole evening by the perusal of the *libretto* of the piece. Madame Miolan Carvalho has made her *rentrée* in *Faust.* Useless would it be describing the continued plaudits which greeted this favourite singer, or the quantities of bouquets, laurel-wreaths, &c., &c., which were thrown to her. I am sure that you will agree with me in thinking that this sort of thing is pleasant enough to witness, and must be exceedingly agreeable to the recipient; but to go into a lengthened description of it, for persons who were not present, is rather insipid.

The weather is extremely pleasant, and has been so for the last week; cool and bracing, it has been like an enchanter's wand, for it has thrown open for air and preparation the grand hotels of the rich and noble families who fly from Paris as soon as Spring's genial breezes come, and only return when "Jack Frost" is about. However, there are already some of the fine equipages of the well-known families to be seen rolling up and down the Champs Elysées, and the activity of trade is a sure sign that the *élite* of Paris will soon be at home.

Speaking of the *élite*, reminds me of what has just befallen a young American now in Paris, and I will take the liberty of giving the details of the affair. He is a gay, ardent Southerner, and left his native city a few months since, having arrived at the age of twenty-one, and the full enjoyment of a large fortune. He came to Paris with the intention of getting into the best society No new *noblesse* would suit his refined taste. His desire was to be on terms of delightful familiarity with the denizens of the Faubourg St. Germain, the *quartier, par excellence*, of the *haute noblesse*. Once in the gay capital, he set about accomplishing his

purpose with decided energy. He perfected himself in the language, and took lessons in dancing and music. This idea grew upon him during the lapse of time necessary to acquire these accomplishments, and he frequently informed the persons whom he met of his determination. At last he made the acquaintance of a young man, a fellow-pupil at the dancing academy, to whom he imparted his *désir brulant.* This new acquaintance praised the idea, informed the young American that he was enchanted to hear of this resolve, and ended by promising his aid, which was no small gain, as he was a *bona fide* Count, not one of the mushroom nobility, but a person whose ancestors had had the inestimable privilege of following the crazy monk to Palestine and knocking off the heads of sundry infidels. Decidedly he was of the *ancienne noblesse,* and he felt flattered that a Republican should evince such a praiseworthy desire to enter the circle of society to which the Count belonged; nay more, he would assist the young stranger, and at once proposed to introduce him to his aunt the Marquise. Delighted beyond measure at this stroke of good fortune, the American seized his new acquaintance by the hand and in the most grateful manner returned his thanks, and asked the noble Count to "take a drink." The acquaintance ripened into the warmest friendship; so much so, that the Count persuaded the American to take a larger suite of rooms, to get a fine carriage and more servants, and proposed to his delighted friend that they should live together. They did so for several months, during which time the young stranger paid all the bills, it being agreed that he should do so for the first year, the Count the next. The Southerner was duly presented to the Marquise, whom he found to be a most charming woman, a widow living in the Quartier St. Germain, and having about

her the evidences of wealth and taste. She was very agreeable and kind to the young stranger, and took him with her to the Opera, and to call upon many of her titled friends. She was a handsome woman, and quite young, and, as a natural consequence, the gentleman was soon *épris* of the Marquise. He even went so far one night as to propose marriage. She gravely told him that she was partial to him, but that her family would never consent to her marrying a man without a title. He was in despair, and hastened to tell the Count, the confidant of his love. The Count was sorry, and really did not know what to do for his young friend, but would try to make the Marquise relent. The next day the Count came in, radiant and with a smiling air. He had found out an expedient by which the American might overcome the difficulty. He knew a man, an agent of the Duke of Tuscany, who had a title for sale; it was dear, but then the Marquise was enormously rich, and loved the young man so sincerely, that if once he possessed this title she would marry the American, even if it cost him all his fortune. Fired with the idea of being a noble, and espousing a Marquise, the young Southerner rushed to the person indicated, and asked the price of the wished-for title. Alas, it was dear; almost all the money he possessed was necessary to buy it. He hesitated, but having again seen the Marquise that night at a *soirée* given by her, he signed a cheque, and handed it to the seller of the title (who, by a wonderful coincidence, happened to be at the party), for the amount asked for the parchment that was to make him the happy possessor of a woman who, although much older than himself, was a Marquise of the *haute noblesse*. He returned to his rooms that night full of hope and champagne, and sank to slumber, murmuring the name of his future spouse.

He awoke late the next day to find the Count gone, having just received a letter calling him to one of his estates in Italy. The young man cared but little for the absence of the Count; he flew to meet his promised wife. Arrived at the house, he was informed that Madame no longer lived there; she had left in the morning early, without saying where she was going. Light dawned upon the Yankee: he rushed to his banker's; the cheque had been presented early in the morning and paid, but a few thousand francs remained to his credit. He soon ascertained that he had been duped—his parchment was all that remained; and upon opening the *rouleau*, he found that it was a fine photograph of the Pont Neuf. This week the young gentleman goes back to the United States, cured of his desire to associate with the *noblesse*, and a poor man.

This story has a moral which may be of service to young strangers of all nations coming to Paris. It has been the lot of your correspondent to make the acquaintance of a great many Americans—in fact a couple of years I passed in the United States. I formed a very favourable opinion of our cousins; I consider them noble-hearted, generous, high-minded people for the most part; of course, they have their foibles, and perhaps the greatest of all these meets the eye continually in Paris. Any one seeing the carriages of the wealthy Americans in Paris would never for a moment imagine their owners to be Republicans, belonging to a country having no order of nobility, and where all the men of mark are those who have made their own standing and reputation. For these vehicles are the finest you see, have very large coats of arms on the panels, and the servants are dressed out in the most gorgeous liveries. It really does seem a wonder to one knowing the country, how these good people came in

possession of the splendid *couronnes* of marquis, duke, or count. The French, when informed that Americans have neither titles nor wear orders, and in fact consider themselves as noble without such things as with them, are inclined to look upon the owners of the described carriages and liveries as—I leave you to imagine what. The magnificent coats of arms of these Republicans are displayed by them upon all occasions. They paste them in the backs of their books, have them embroidered on their clothes, carry immense seal rings with the "arms" engraved thereupon most exquisitely, with which rings they seal the most casual note they have to write, be it to friend, stranger, tailor, or bonnet-maker. Brother Jonathan must not be astonished if John Bull and Crapaud shrug their shoulders when the Yankee talk of equality and independence, seeing as they do citizens of the boasted land of liberty go to any expense, or intrigue in the meanest way, to be favoured with an *entrée* at a court ball, or to have a nobleman sit at their dinner-table.

A laughable incident occured the other day to the handsome Miss N——, of London, whose sparkling conversation and fine teeth are turning the heads of the susceptible Frenchmen just now. "Send me some *poudre d'orris*," said she, to the *demoiselle* of one of the grand perfumery establishments. "*Très bien, Mademoiselle.*" We all know that orris root is very good for the teeth. The mother of the young lady, who is a very High Churchwoman, and has a laudable horror of all French frivolities and deceptions, was petrified about half an hour after at receiving, directed to her daughter, a packet of *poudre de riz*, the secret of the deadly-pale complexion of the Parisian ladies so much in vogue among them. The arrival of Miss N—— and her explanation pacified the unhappy mamma, who immediately imagined she

had brought her child to the verge of an abyss in allowing her to remain a few weeks in Paris. The *poudre de riz* was soon exchanged for *poudre d'orris*, with many apologies on the part of the *demoiselle* of the shop.

I have not spoken much of the fashions for some time past, because the undecided state of the weather has prevented the grand dress and bonnet-makers from bringing out any *Nouveautés;* but now that the season is on the point of opening, the *beau monde* coming back, and strangers arriving, these important people will be giving us some of the new fashions for next winter, which I shall not fail to transmit to my readers.

LETTER XIX.

The Interview Between the Emperor and the King of the Belgians—Visit of the Emperor of Austria to the Emperor Napoleon—The Camp at Chalons—Theft of M. Hua's Child—Liberty of the Press in France—Paris Amusements—Affecting Incident—Paris Sad *v.* Paris Gay—The Invited to Compiègne—Autumn Fashions.

Paris, Wednesday, September 21, 1859.

WE learn from Bayonne that King Leopold, on his arrival at that place, was received with great cordiality by the inhabitants. His Majesty proceeded to Biarritz in the Imperial carriage, and alighted at the residence prepared for him. He had scarcely arrived, says a letter from Biarritz, before a modest *coupé*, drawn by two horses, drove up to the door; the Emperor alone was in the carriage: the King stood at the head of the staircase, and when the two sovereigns met they shook hands cordially and then retired to the Grand Salon,

which they did not leave for an hour and a half. At the end of that time the King and Emperor re-entered the *coupé* and drove to the Villa Eugênie, where the Empress was waiting to receive her august visitor. It is said that the King of the Belgians was charmed with her Majesty, whose beauty and *spirituelle* conversation were even greater than he expected. The King's stay at Biarritz is to be but short. Some absurd rumours as to the purport of his Majesty's visit have been flying about Paris. Perhaps the most ridiculous of all is the following, that King Leopold is gone to Biarritz simply to ask for the throne of Central Italy for his second son, the Comte de Flandres. This of course is without foundation.

The magnificent Palace at Compiègne had undergone repairs for the reception of the Imperial Court. The Emperor of Austria is expected to spend several weeks with their Majesties at Compiègne; and the fine Palace of the Elysées, in the Faubourg St. Honoré, the former residence of Napoleon I. and Josephine, is said to be placed at the disposition of his Majesty of Austria; but it is hardly probable that that Sovereign, after stopping at Compiègne, will make a *séjour* in Paris.

The Emperor Napoleon has abandoned his intention of visiting the camp at Chalons this year; in fact, orders have been given for the immediate raising of the Camp, as the soldiers are already suffering from the cold and damp. Heavy rains have fallen, and the Emperor's solicitude for the soldiers has been so great, that his Majesty has foregone his desire of being present at the grand manœuvres. It is said, however, that the whole of the time, since the formation of the camp, has been usefully employed; as on the days when there were no field exercises the men have employed their time in gymnastics, fencing, dancing, &c. "Perfect order,

excellent discipline, and an admirable feeling of military brotherhood has never ceased to reign among the troops of the different arms," says the *Constitutionnel.*

A melancholy affair occurred a few days ago at the Tuileries Garden. A nurse, carrying a child of about two months old, was accosted by a young and well-dressed person, who asked if that was not the child of M. Hua, Judge of the Imperial Court; the nurse answered in the affirmative, whereupon the person, embracing the infant, tenderly exclaimed, "I am his aunt," and taking the child in her arms, she made affectionate enquiries after different members of the family. After a few moments conversation, the *soi-disant* aunt discovered that she had left her parasol in a shop opposite the Rue de Rivoli; she begged the nurse to fetch it, saying she would take care of the baby till she returned. The simple country-woman fell into the snare, and when she returned from her errand found no trace of either the woman or child. The unfortunate creature, after a search of several hours, was obliged to return home, and break the news to her mistress. M. Hua offers a reward of ten thousand francs (£400) for the recovery of the child; the police are making the most active researches, but up to the present moment, three days after the child's disappearance, no clue to the thief has been found. It is generally supposed that the object of this inhuman act was vengeance, as M. Hua, in his capacity of Judge of the Imperial Court, is often forced by his decisions to make enemies. The nurse of the child is in the most deplorable state—reason seems to be leaving her; while the mother and father are, as may be imagined, plunged in the deepest despair. This is not the first time that children have been stolen from the Tuileries Garden; and yet there are a number of guards constantly walking about. It seems really extra-

ordinary that they did not observe as peculiar, a well-dressed person rushing away with a child; for she must have run fast to be able to have reached the opposite gate before the nurse's return. Let us hope that this inhuman wretch may soon be discovered.

The note which appeared in the day before yestesday's *Moniteur*, disclaiming any intention to change as regards the liberty of the press, has caused the greatest disappointment; the more so, as the article published in the semi-official *Constitutionnel* may reasonably be called a half-promise, at least, of entire freedom of the mighty engine. After all, one cannot much blame the head of the State; self-preservation is the first law, and he knows that the people he governs have only to be told by the press that the reigning Sovereign is an "imbecile," to fully believe it without the least inquiry into the matter for themselves. The French could never understand and appreciate a journal like "Punch," which attacks indiscriminately, but without bitter feeling, all leading statesmen both at home and abroad. Start anything like that here, ridicule any of the Ministers or other Government officials, and the Frenchman would immediately take it *au sérieux*, and it would be the signal for the downfal of that Minister or Government official. Truly, they are a strange people.

The new building, next to the Palais de l'Industrie and opposite to the Cirque de l'Impératrice in the Champs Elysées, is now quite completed. There will be a panoramic exhibition in it, and the workmen are now occupied in placing the pictures. It is said that this will be the most wonderful thing of its kind known, that the most magical illusions and delusions are to be performed. One picture, called the "Battle of the Pyramids" has cost thirty-five artists eighteen

months of constant toil, and 70,000f. expense to the owner. This picture is 127 yards long and 15 yards high, and to get it into the building destined for its reception it will be necessary to unroof the house, and, by means of a descending railway, place the picture into its proper position. Paris has so many places of amusement already that building another seems madness; but then the Parisians are the greatest theatre-goers in the world, and I dare say this will be, like every additional café that appears on the Boulevard—crowded constantly. A band of negro singers are now giving entertainments in one of the small halls here; but as they are real, and not blacked-for-the-occasion negroes, they do not meet with the support of their compatriots the Americans, while their worn-out jokes in English are anything but amusing to the French, as is proved by the "beggarly account of empty boxes" which nightly greets their view.

The beautifnl comedy by Madame de Girardin, called *La joie fait peur*—one of the favourites of the *répertoire* of the Français—was being played, a few evenings ago, in one of the provincial towns, when the following incident occurred. One of the actresses, Madame Larmet, had no sooner made her *entrée* than she burst into a violent flood of tears, which continued such a length of time that the curtain was obliged to be lowered. The audience, with that impetuosity which characterises the French, gave vent to loud sounds of disapprobation, and after a few moments the stage manager made his appearance, and explained that the child of Madame Larmet had died the afternoon of that day, and that if she was obliged to continue the performance, she begged the indulgence of the audience. Loud cries of "She must not play" were heard on all sides, and the piece was changed. It may seem hard-hearted in the manager not to have given

the *rôle* to another person—if necessary change the piece; but he is excusable when one takes into consideration the nature of a French audience—they are *exigeants* to the last degree. No actor in France dare interlard any play with his own speeches; if such a thing were done, so as to admit of no doubt, the audience would demand an apology. This has occurred often. They seem to look upon the changing of anything in the programme as a direct insult to themselves. It is a good idea in the long run, but sometimes brings about disagreeable scenes, as in the case of Madame Larmet.

I am afraid that my letter is rather lugubrious this week. If you knew what sort of a day it is, you would not wonder at it—damp, raw, rainy, dark, disagreeable—in fact, one of the days which show Paris's *revers de la medaille* in its most solemn light. As long as the sun shines, Paris is certainly the most beautiful place in the world—gay, dazzling, and brilliant. London is like some great monastery in comparison; but when the rain comes—alas, *quel changement!*—all is gloomy, miserable, and saddening. Whilst in London the man of business trudges gaily along through the rain, thinking of the cosy little nest where the dear ones are making all tidy for papa's arrival, the same *homme d'affaires* is in Paris looking as cross and gloomy as the weather, when he thinks of his *appartement* up numberless flights of stairs, where the only occupation of madame and *les enfants* is to gaze moodily out on the white blank wall in front of the court-yard underneath them; for they have not yet reached the degree of prosperity necessary for the renting of an *appartement* looking on the street. Madame's *salon* is all white and gold, perhaps—how beautiful it looks at night with the chandeliers lighted, or of a beautiful sunshiny morning—but to-day it gives the poor lady a shudder as she

looks at its solemn coldness; she resolves to tell Monsieur when he gets home that she will be content with less theatre-going and carriages to the Bois, if he will change their *appartement* for one looking on the street; even if it be smaller, and paper on the walls instead of gilding, she will be satisfied, it will be so much more cheerful; but the next bright day and the production of a grand new piece with scenic effects at the Opera, changes Madame's resolve, which is formed and broken as the weather is good or bad.

It is said that the invitations for the *séjour* at Compiègne have all been delivered, though the names of persons invited have not as yet appeared in the daily papers, as is the custom. I saw some beautiful dresses being made for the Countess de L——, whose name figures among the first of the *invitées*. It was made of black satin (satin will be very much in vogue this year), corsage without points, large flowing sleeves, the dress being ornamented with little bands of black velvet, about five inches in width, ten in number, set perpendicularly all round the bottom of the skirt; these bands are most elaborately embroidered with black silk, and a small heading of black lace. Same trimming on the corsage and sleeves. The *ceinture* is composed of black velvet, embroidered in the same manner, with two long ends trimmed with deep black lace. This forms an excessively rich dress, even in black; but when made in colours—for instance, a blue satin with blue velvet, or a white satin with mauve velvet—it is for a dinner dress *tout ce qu'il y a de plus élégant*. It may not be uninteresting to know the price of this dress; the dressmaker asked 300f., or £12, for it, quite ready to put on, in any colour. As the embroidery on the velvet is very fine, this may not be called an exorbitant price.

The scarfs so much worn in England for the last two years

will be worn in Paris this season. They will be trimmed with two deep rows of lace, but are or should be used for carriage dress and no other; though I suppose they will be appropriated by those having no carriages very soon. I had quite an animated discussion with Madame B——, whose husband holds an important post near the Emperor, and who is (the lady I mean) a most assiduous follower of the fashion. "What," exclaimed I, "you are going to take up the scarfs which but a year ago you laughed so much at, and accused my countrywomen of the worst taste in the world for wearing!" "Que voulez vous, chère dame," she said; we must have something new; and then our dressmakers will give these scarfs *un je ne sais quoi* that those worn by the English ladies never could get." "I see how it is," I rejoined; "it is no longer the *Parisiennes* who are fashion givers; it is we who are setting the *modes* for the whole world; depend upon it, you'll come to the despised Jane Clarke bonnets sooner or later." "Perhaps so," she replied; "but if we do it will be the same as in regard to the scarfs. Our *modistes* will reform the Jane Clarke bonnet, and then we'll use it. *C'est comme cela avec tout*," said the pretty black-eyed lady, gaily; "the English and Americans invent everything, we *perfectionné* it; you have genius, we have *goût*; we get the credit of your inventions, it's true, but then you have the satisfaction of knowing that we have improved them to an extent you never would have dreamed of—*consolez vous*." I thought that their getting the credit of our inventions was rather poor consolation; but as I was in the enemy's camp, without a friendly compatriot's voice to second mine, I was silent—a wise *parti* of mine, and one which I advise all my readers to take when they find themselves on the point of arguing with their neighbours. The French have a great flow

of conversation, no doubt; but is this flow of words "a feast of reason?" Not always, perhaps; though it is sometimes very witty conversation, which our London original farce-writers make the best of. *C'est toujours comme cela, chère Madame B——*. Your writers imagine funny farces, which our writers appropriate, rewrite and make funnier. We get the credit of them, it is true, but then you have the satisfaction (?) of knowing that we have made them attain a degree of laughable absurdity you never would have dreamed of—*consolez vous*, therefore, and adieu!

LETTER XX.

The Theft of M. Hua's Child—Unpleasant Disclosure in High Quarters—M. Blondin, the Rope Dancer—The Imperial Court and their Royal Visitor—Operatic and Musical News

Paris, Wednesday, September 28, 1859.

THE *enlèvement* of the child of M. Hua has caused the greatest excitement in Paris. The infant (as has been announced by some of the London daily papers) has been returned to its parents, after an absence of four days. The child was found in the town of Orleans, in the possession of an old woman whose business it is to take in children to wean. This old woman says that the child was brought to her by a young woman whose description answers that given by M. Hua's nurse, who went away without giving her name or address, but promising to return the next day. The person not returning, and the old woman hearing that a child had been stolen at Paris, gave this one to the Commissary of Police at Orleans, and stated all the circumstances connected

with its being in her possession. M. Hua went to Orleans to fetch the child, and on his return to the house in the Rue Jacob, found an immense crowd of sympathising parents, of all stations in life, waiting his arrival. On seeing him get out of the carriage, with the child in his arms, the crowd set up shouts of delight at the happy termination of the affair. M. and Madame Hua have not been married long, this being their first child. Every one is anxious to know what was the woman's object in taking the child, but as yet nothing is positively known. The following is the report current. The young woman, who is nineteen years of age, is said to have had, while living in Paris, intimate relations with a young man of respectable family whom she hoped to induce to marry her. On her return to Orleans, in order to obtain the realisation of a promise which had been made to her, she feigned pregnancy, and in due time a confinement, of which she informed her lover. In order to be able to make her story good in the event of his coming to Orleans, she committed the crime for which she has now to answer. Another account states that the girl had recently given birth to a child which had died, and fearing that this fact would probably prevent the marriage, she conceived the plan of substituting another child for that which she had lost. On the third day after the carrying off of the child the following curious episode occurred: The pelisse and pelerine which the child had on when stolen were picked up in the Rue du Temple, and sent to Madame Hua the day before the child was restored, causing her great anxiety. The things were found by a female, named Guerin, and she told her neighbours of the finding. Among these persons were a couple, named Martin, and they, having read in the journals of the loss of the child, thought they might derive profit from the possession of the things. They there-

fore, begged to be entrusted with them, on the false pretext that they wished to lend them to a friend of theirs, who was about to have a child baptized. The woman Guerin consented; and the Martin's immediately took them to M. and Madame Hua, who at once recognised them. In giving up the things, the couple intimated that they were on the trace of the child, and might in a few hours be able to recover him, and M. Hua presented them with 500f. Subsequently the woman Guerin, hearing of what they had done, and of the sum which they had received, reproached them with cheating her, and claimed from them the 500 francs as her righful property. They refused to give it up, and she, in consequence, after a scene of great violence, laid a complaint against them for swindling before the public prosecutor. M. Hua has addressed a letter to the journals expressive of his gratitude for the services rendered by the press in facilitating the recovery of the child. The woman who took the infant, with her mother, have been arrested and brought to Paris for trial. They give the name of Chéreau. The young girl is said to be extremely handsome, of the Spanish type of beauty, and not at all vulgar in her manners or conversation.

A very unpleasant, but not wholly unexpected, affair has occurred in high quarters. The Prince N. left Paris about ten days ago to travel in Switzerland. His Royal and Imperial spouse, hearing that the suite of her husband comprised other persons than those strictly necessary to keep up the state of a prince, resolved to join him without further delay. Her unexpected arrival at Geneva angered her lord and master beyond control, and he asked the lady by whose authorisation, and by what right she dared follow him. "The right that every wife has to join her husband," she replied; "but since my presence is so obnoxious to you, I

will return to my father, whose love for me will prevent his considering State interests before the happiness of his child." So saying, the young Princess C. left the Prince, who has just spent the dowry she brought him, in the purchase of an estate in Switzerland. The Princess is now in Paris, making all the necessary arrangements for her final and entire departure from the scene of (to her) so much unhappiness. One cannot but applaud her resolve—young, noble, kind-hearted, a fearful realisation must it have been to her, of all those tender fancies of a husband which every girl has, to find herself linked to a man almost old enough to be her father, a man of vulgar tastes, corrupt ideas, immoral tendencies—everything that one of affectionate heart despises and abhors. Alas for the *mariage de convenance!*

An absurd letter, published originally in the *New York Times*, denying the existence of such a man as Blondin, or his or any other person ever having crossed the Niagara Falls, has been extensively copied in the French as well as London journals. The *Moniteur* of yesterday contains a letter from a German, just returned to his native country from America, which declares that the writer has seen the act performed by Blondin three different times. As for myself, while in America I saw this tight-rope dancer many times; he was then connected with the Ravel *troupe*. Those who deny the fact of the man's ever having crossed the Falls, are but little aware of the situation of the great national curiosity. The Great Western Railway coming from Detroit, U.S., and connecting with the Great Trunk for Montreal, Canada, stops at half-a-mile's distance from the scene of Blondin's exploits, and every few hours the train passes. How many thousand individuals do you suppose have got off the train at Niagara village, gone to the Falls, seen Blondin cross, and been back

again in time for the next train for Montreal? The American public is not one to be trifled with. Woe to the unfortunate man who would announce a performance which did not come off! No; this letter published in the *New York Times* is a poor attempt to bring itself into the notice of European journals. It has succeeded in doing so, but in a manner that will redound but little to its credit.

The Emperor and Empress do not go to Compiègne till the second fortnight in October. The King of the Belgians has quitted Biarritz. It is said that his Majesty was much pleased with his *séjour* at the Empress's favourite watering-place. The weather is said to be delightful, and the health of their Majesties excellent. Although no official announcement has as yet been made, it is generally understood that the Empress is in a delicate situation. It is rumoured that a celebrated London physician, who was summoned to consult with Dubois before the birth of the Prince Imperial, has been sent for to meet their Majesties at Compiègne. The birth of another son would be a happy event for those desirous of keeping up the *dynastie Napoléonienne.*

Theatricals are in a flourishing state just now. The Opéra Comique has produced *La Pagode*, which has met with great success. The music is pretty, and the plot very interesting. Mdlle. Guffroy, now Madame Geoffroy, the favourite singer at the Bouffes Parisiens, has been engaged at the Opéra Comique, and made her first appearance in the *Pagode;* she made a good impression. *Le Songe d'une Nuit d'Eté*, with the favourite tenor Montaubry as Shakspeare, and a *débutante*, Mdlle. Monrose, as Queen Elizabeth, is still drawing crowded houses. This *artiste* is a decided acquisition to the already complete *corps* of the Opéra Comique; she is handsome, and has a sweet flexible voice. Another

dâbut at this theatre is that of the *premier prix* at the Consevatoire for this year, a young man named Caussaole, who in the principal *rôle* of the *Chaises à Porteurs* made a great sensation by his fine strong voice, his manly appearance, and his excellent acting. The Opéra Comique has an ungrateful task to perform, in regard to the singers, male or female; the managers are always on the look out for *débutants*, who are engaged immediately; if they possess voices strong enough, they are forthwith engaged at the Grand Opéra, so that at the Opéra Comique we only hear tenors whose voices have but little power. Montaubry seems to be exactly what they require, as his voice is not strong enough to tempt the Opéra, and still has volume enough to fill the Opéra Comique. A queer incident took place at the Grand Opéra a few nights ago on the occasion of the representation of *Robert le Diable*. The actress playing Isabella was taken suddenly ill at the end of the second act, and Mdlle. Dussy, who was personating Alice in the same piece, took upon herself the two *rôles* after begging the indulgence of the public through the manager. She acquitted herself admirably, and was called before the curtain at the end of the piece; a great compliment in Paris.

The city of Paris has purchased the Théatre Lyrique for the sum of 1,400,000f. The city enters into possession on the 15th of February, but nothing is yet decided as to when the theatre will be pulled down, nor as to the amount of indemnity to be paid to M. Carvalho, the director. Extensive improvements are to be made in that portion of the city in which the Lyrique is situated. The Parisians hope that the tearing down of this theatre will not take from them the favourite Madame Miolan Carvalho—that it will, on the contrary, cause her to appear in a theatre whose size and situation will be more worthy the talent of so charming an

artiste. The disagreeable, remote Lyrique, has only been saved from complete oblivion by this songstress's warbling. Many of the Paris theatrical and musical critics have thought proper to complain of Madame Miolan's singing since her return from London. They say she has lost that charming freshness and vigour of voice which characterised her; that she has in fact, become cold and—English! I must say, I cannot perceive any change in her, either in acting or singing. Her voice is still the most flexible and musical we have among the French singers, and it is not fair to complain without a cause. A grand musical festival will be given on October 2nd, in the Palace of Industry. The orchestra will consist of 1,200 musicians from the different barracks in Paris. This little army of musical soldiers will execute twelve selections from the favourite operas, while a new piece, composed for the occasion called "La Milanese" will be given; also the "Polka de Solferino," the history of the composing of which is not without interest. The day after this battle, when the victorious French were looking over the field covered with the bodies of their amiable friends the Austrians, amongst other things, the MS. of this polka was found, and given to the bandmaster; that person tried it, found it pretty, and christened it, as I have said; so the musical Austrian who composed the Solferino Polka, if he be now alive, will have the satisfaction of knowing that his piece will be performed for the gratification of an assembly of his late foes. The receipts of this concert will be given to the Artists' Society, a flourishing institution here.

LETTER XXI.

Commencement of the Opera Season in Paris—Movements of the Court—A Visit to the Gobelins Tapestry Manufactory—A Piece of French Assurance—Autumn Fashions—Death of the American Minister at Paris.

Paris, Wednesday, October 5, 1859.

THE opening of the Italian Opera for the season of 1859-60, took place last Saturday, in presence of a brilliant and fashionable auditory. This event is always the signal for the re-appearance in town, and at the theatre, of those favoured persons who are known as the *beau monde* of Paris. The freshest *toilettes*, the finest jewels are all brought out on this occasion. When the Empress is in town, she invariably honours the theatre by her presence on the opening night. The piece selected was Verdi's *Traviata;* not, it is true, a very favourable specimen of that composer's works, but one which, nevertheless, enjoys a high degree of popularity, perhaps on account of the subject. Madame Penco took the part of the heroine, and was greeted with great cordiality on her entrance—a rare compliment at the Italiens, copied perhaps from the kind manner in which the London audience always welcomes its operatic favourites. Madame Penco's voice during the first act was rather sharp and unpleasant, but mellowed down considerably in the second, and she went through the opera with more than usual ability. Her acting was remarkably good, and Madame Penco was honoured with several recalls. Gardoni was the Alfred, in Mario's place; an ungrateful task, as comparison between the rendering of the *rôle* by the former and by the latter was sure to be made, Gardoni, however, went evenly and

creditably through his part, and was frequently applauded. It is a pity that this tenor does not throw more animation into the characters he is performing, as his stage appearance is good, and his voice pleasing. Graziani was as heretofore the father, and his rich baritone came out with all that sweetness of expression which renders him so great a favourite. The subordinate parts were satisfactorily filled; and, as a whole, the opening night at the Italiens may be considered as a brilliant one. A comedy, called *Le Testament de Cæsar Girodot*, has been produced at the Odéon, and well received. I confess to not having seen it—first, because the title struck me as being too much like the favourite Gymnase comedy of the *Héritage de M. Plumet*, and secondly, because the Odéon is such a distance from all quarters of Paris except the one in which it is situated, that one dreads the long ride. Being in the Quartier Latin, it is the favourite resort of the medical and law students in that vicinity. The following *charge* on the remoteness of this theatre was perpetrated by three of the most celebrated of the Paris theatrical critics. On the occasion of a *première représentation* the three wags hired a *chaise de poste*, with postilions and out-riders, and with horses galloping, dust flying, and bells ringing, drove up to the principal entrance of the Odéon. Covered with dust (put on for the occasion), the gentlemen got out, and in a loud voice cried, "Here, unharness the tired beasts, for they must be tired after their long journey; rub them down well, and let them eat plentifully, for they have come from Paris to the Odéon." The shouts of the bystanders may well be imagined, though it was said that the manager of the theatre was furious at the joke and jokers. In spite of the unfavourable situation of the Odéon, it ranks as second to no theatre in Paris but the Comédie Française. It has always

been noted for the excellence of its actors and the purity of the pieces produced.

The Emperor and Empress return to Paris on the evening of the 12th. The Duke and Duchess d'Albe have arrived at Biarritz on a visit to their Majesties. Lord Cowley has also arrived at that place. M. Fournier, a celebrated French sculptor, had an interview with the Emperor at St. Sauveur, concerning the erection on the Butte-Montmartre of a colossal statue, of either St. Geneviève, the patron saint of Paris, or of Glory, or of Peace. The Emperor has referred the affair to the Minister of the Interior, and a commission has been formed to examine the plan.

I visited the manufactory of Gobelins Tapestry a few days ago, as I had been told that some remarkable works were going on there. I was amply repaid for my visit, by being shown a series of portraits (in tapestry), of the great French sculptors, architects, and painters of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These portraits are to decorate th Galerie d'Apollon, or Apollo's Gallery at the Louvre. The portrait of Jean Goujon, the restorer of the art of sculpture in France, and the celebrated architect, Etienne Duperae, are among the number. English ladies coming to Paris must not fail to remind their fathers or husbands to take them to see the Gobelins Tapestry. The officials are very polite to strangers, and only require to see your passport to give you instant admittance.

The *Presse*, an evening Journal of some importance here, is publishing a series of articles entitled "Un coup d'œil comparatif sur les industries rivales de l'Angleterre et de la France." As you may well imagine, France, in the one-sided arguing of this writer, comes out victorious on all points. The French, you will be surprised to learn, discovered steam,

gas, the art of telegraphing, and photography! But what is much more astonishing than this discovery, is that of a writer for the *Patrie*, who has found out that French woollens, poplins, steel, and, in fact, all the different articles for the manufacture of which England has been celebrated from time immemorial, are quite as well, if not better made in France; and in a logical manner, the writer attempts to convince his readers that the same woollen shawl, for which they willingly give 55f. in London, may be got in Paris for 45f.! And so with everything. Sheffield is a great national deception, inasmuch as the steel is all done by French workmen, &c. At a first reading of one of these articles one is tempted to get angry at the absurdity of a writer who attempts to pull down ideas which are as strong as the fortifications at Gibraltar; on further reflection, however, one perceives the real object. Within the last few years English articles have become very *recherchés* in Paris; English woollens, cottons, drugs, and groceries are in great demand. The fashionable young gentleman does not consider himself well-dressed, if his clothes are not made of English cloth, and cut *à l'Anglaise*; the fashionable lady's wardrobe is not complete, if she has not two or three *popelines Anglaises*. This, of course, is anything but pleasing or lucrative to the French manufacturers, and they, through the medium of a *Chronique*, or sort of familiar style of leading article in the newspapers, are attempting to disseminate the idea that French articles are quite as good as English ones. *Reste à savoir* if they will succeed.

The heat of the weather has brought out a great many muslin dresses for walking and carriage toilette; but to give this essentially summer dress a slight autumnal appearance, a burnous of light cloth either in cashmere wadded or lined, is

worn. The square Arab hoods with tassels are still much in favour. This is the seasons for Indian Cashmeres, which are always aristocratic and *distingués*. I contend that one sees more of these costly articles in Paris than in any other city in the world. The reason is, there the *trousseau* of a bride is always supposed to contain a Cashmere, and many persons in Paris set aside other and more useful things to be enabled to have that desired object. Silk dresses are now made of delicate colours, and trimmed with a ribbon of a brilliant hue round the bottom and up each side of the front, leaving a space between, wide enough to place five or seven rosettes of ribbon the same colour as the trimming, surrounded with black guipure. The same kind of trimming is made for dresses of barege or printed muslin, in which case the ground of the ribbon should be black or white, with bunches of flowers, and the rosettes trimmed with black or white guipure. The sleeves, opening square in front, are trimmed to match, with a rosette at the top of the opening, and another on the shoulder. Bonnets for the present season are both handsome and simple. One very beautiful one I saw at a celebrated *modiste's* was made as follows: a plain velvet, of a very delicate shade of peach colour, lined in the front with light green velvet, and trimmed with a *bandeau* of peach velvet and a small bouquet of gold brown flowers. The outside was ornamented by three small green feathers, and the strings were peach colour. Another, of white imperial velvet, trimmed on the outside with *ponceau*, or scarlet velvet, across the top, the ends forming brides or strings, a *ponceau* velvet bow on the inside fastened a curled feather, which passed under the outside trimming and hung loosely on one side; the curtain was of white blonde. This last I unhesitatingly pronounce a "love of a bonnet;" and I

advise my readers to take the description to their *modistes*, and get it made up forthwith. Another very pretty, but much less elegant one, was as follows. White imperial velvet, with a long white feather round the edge of the front; the crown was full and slightly hanging, trimmed on the top with a bow of white velvet and blonde, the ends of the blonde hanging on either side; the curtain of blonde. A velvet bow was the only trimming inside. Quilted bonnets will be worn by very young ladies this winter; several have already appeared. The quilting will not be done in the diamond pattern, as usual, but in medallion and other shapes, which have a novel and pretty appearance. Hats are very much worn in the country and at the seaside. It is said they will be generally adopted this winter, but it is not at all decided. In ball-dresses we have as yet nothing; in fact, as there are never any balls given in Paris till the second fortnight in November, it would be useless to bring out these dresses yet. I saw some beautiful *toilettes* on the opening night at the Italiens. One worn by the Duchess de S——, who created a sensation this season in London by her beauty and extreme grace, was made of a very delicate green satin, *décollettée*, with a *berthe* composed of green velvet and rich white blonde; the corsage without points, but with a *ceinture* of the same green velvet, with long ends, which were cut round and trimmed with blonde. The skirt was entirely plain, very full, and set on the corsage with large plaits. The head-dress of green velvet, plaited in with gold cord, with two large gold and green tassels hanging behind. The hair *à la grecque*—that is, quite close to the head in front; behind, a large knot of hair, from the centre of which escaped three or four careless ringlets. Diamonds, and a green satin fan spangled with gold, completed this charming *toilette*. The dressmakers say

that these satin dresses trimmed with velvet may be made high-necked *a volonté* by the introduction of a high-necked velvet *berthe*, which is cut square where it joins the original corsage, and has a pretty effect. It may be so; but to tell the truth, I am not much of an advocate for dresses, or any other article of wearing apparel, which serve two purposes—they never look complete in either form to me.

On Monday morning last, the Hon. J. T. Mason, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of the United States to France, expired suddenly from an attack of apoplexy. The deceased was much esteemed by his countrymen, and was a man of ability. A funeral ceremony will be performed to-day in the American Chapel, Rue de Berri.

LETTER XXII.

The Imperial Visit to Bordeaux—Paris Theatricals—Transplanting the Boulevard Trees—A Visit to Rosa Bonheur's Studio—Fashion at the Races—Funeral of the American Minister in Paris.

Paris, Wednesday, October 12, 1859

THE exceedingly bad weather seems to have somewhat damped the coloured lamps and enthusiasm of the inhabitants of Bordeaux, on the occasion of the visit of the Emperor and Empress, who arrived at that city on Monday evening last. The *Moniteur* and *Constitutionnel* of this morning give telegraphic accounts of the rejoicings, as also the text of a speech made by the Emperor in answer to one from the Archbishop of Bordeaux. This speech, so the gentlemen say, is of political importance; but, as we ladies have not to

trouble our heads about such things, I make no comments upon it. In spite of the bad weather, their Majesties completed their engagements, and went to the Exhibition, received the authorities, gave a grand dinner, and made a promenade to the Bec d'Ambés with a perseverance and a desire to please the people highly commendable. I always feel sorry when it rains on the occasion of a *fête* in France; to any people it is a disappointment, but the French really get so out of temper about it, that one cannot help condoling with them. The day of the *entrée* of the troops—the 14th of August—it was a study, the difference in the expression of the faces in the morning, when all was bright and beautiful, and towards noon, when the rain began to fall. The Emperor, however, paid little attention to the general stampede or to the rain, which came falling down most unceremoniously on his Imperial head. At Bordeaux, also, his Majesty rode about, saw a boat-race, &c., in defiance of the *mauvais temps*. Their Majesties return to the chateau of St. Cloud this evening. The Empress's health is said to be much improved since she left Paris.

Theatricals have been flourishing this week. The Gymnase has brought out a comedy called *Un petit fils de Mascarille*, which is destined to have an immense run, as it is perhaps one of the best comedies ever presented on the modern French stage. The interest is kept up from the rising of the curtain on the first act, till the end of the fifth. The name of the author, M. Henri Meilhac, was given out with great applause at the end of the piece. Mdlle. Marquet, an actress of much merit, quite surpassed herself in the *rôle* of the guilty but repentant wife; while Geoffrey Dupuis and Derval played with their accustomed *verve* and correctness. The Duke and Duchess d'Albe, sister and brother-in-law to the Empress,

occupied the Imperial box on the occasion of its first representation, and frequently testified their approbation by hearty applause. At the Italiens we have had *l'Italiana in Algieri*, with Alboni and Gardoni in the principal *rôles*. This *chef d'œuvre* of an opera bouffe will always be a favourite. The Porte St. Martin—that theatre of horrors—has laid aside its murderous pieces for the last month, and has been giving a five-act play in verse, *La Jeunesse de Louis XI.* After Mr. Kean it is hard to speak favourably of any personation of Louis XI., but this one differs so essentially in all its points, that one can hardly imagine it is meant for Louis XI. This theatre is preparing *La Reine Margot*, in which Madame Doche, who "created," as they say in French, the part of Marguerite Gauthier in *La Dame aux Camelias* about three years ago at the Vaudeville, plays the principal part. It is said that the *mise en scène* of *La Reine Margot* will be of unequalled splendour. There is to be a grand concert this evening in one of the *salles* of the Hotels du Louvre. This concert, given by Madame Lorini and Miss Hinkley, is honoured by distinguished patronage, and a most brilliant auditory is expected. These fair *artistes* are both American ladies, and the morning papers speak in the highest praise of their talent. They will be assisted by Graziani, the celebrated baritone of the Italiens, who appears by special permission of M. Calzado.

The fine chesnut trees which have for "years agone" delighted the residents in the neighbourhood of the Entrepot des Vins, have been obliged to be removed in consequence of the formation of the new Boulevard Saint Germain, which is to extend to the Quay. These noble trees are now being conveyed to the Champs Elysées for transplantation. From their height, and the girth of their trunks, some of them must, at least, have a growth of sixty years, and they are the

largest to which the present system of removal has been applied. Yesterday afternoon, as one of them was being conveyed on a waggon drawn by six horses along the Quai des Grands Augustins, one of the chains which supported the large mass of earth attached to the roots broke, and the tree fell on one side. It was, however, soon replaced in its upright position, and ultimately lodged in its new abode. Strangers are always struck by the army of gardeners, watering-pot men, &c., who invade the Champs Elysées, at certain hours of the day. No English gentleman's garden is more carefully attended to than is this favourite promenade of the Parisians.

I have been paying a visit to Rosa Bonheur's studio. She receives on Friday, and any one of respectable appearance going there can gain admittance, even if entirely unknown to this celebrated *artist.* She received us with charming cordiality, explained how she intended finishing some works she had commenced, and gave us her autograph. Although Rosa Bonheur has now reached an enviable position in the noble art of which she is a brilliant ornament, life has not always been *couleur de rose* for her. Her father was an artist at Bordeaux; he was a teacher of drawing. Marrying one of his pupils against her parent's wish, was productive of happiness and misery to him—happiness, because his wife was the angel he had depicted her; and misery, because he found that fortune did not smile upon his efforts—nor upon those of his wife, who devoted her energies as a teacher of music, to keep the wolf, famine, from the door, but with indifferent success. The education of the child artist Rosa, began amidst circumstances of this disastrous character. She showed no sign of precocious genius in the direction of art. She was inattentive to study, wild at school, and impatient

LETTER XXIII.

Illness of Prince Jérome—Movements of the Court—A Romantic Story—The Imperial Prince and his Juvenile Battles—Renovations at Versailles—High Rent in Paris, and its results —A Curious Invention—Dénouement of the Romantic Story.

Paris, Wednesday, October 19, 1859.

There is in Paris a class of persons who live by the sale of articles of luxury—things rarely sought after except by the fashionables, those whom we nightly see resplendent in fine attire, in opera boxes, and at the grand balls given by the *élite*; also at those which take place each fortnight during the season in the magnificent and time-honoured halls of the Tuileries. The *marchands, fleuristes, modistes, &c.*, to whom I refer, are at present in a state of deep apprehension—a near relative of the Emperor is slowly but surely passing away. For many months uneasiness has been felt by the Imperial family, but the skill of physicians and a naturally strong frame have, up to the present time, resisted the attacks of wearing disease; but now, the far advanced age of this Prince, and the setting in of a new malady, have awakened the deepest fears. It is even supposed that, should not a very decided change for the better take place, the *fêtes* at Compiègne, and the projected visit of the Emperor of Austria and of the King of the Belgians will be obliged to be set aside. In case of the demise of his Highness, no Court balls, no receptions by the Imperial couple, or by any of the Ministers, will come off this winter. Many ladies have countermanded large orders given to the *marchands* I speak of, and this is the cause of the general lamentation by those persons. The *fêtes* at Compiège have, as it is, been deferred;

the original intention was to repair there immediately after the return from Biarritz. Now, the first of November is the time fixed upon for the departure of the Court from St. Cloud, which reduces by half the duration of the *fêtes*. The Court will return by the 20th of November, as the latter portion of that month is always rainy.

I am well aware that politics should not find their way into a lady's letter—that, in fact, to the majority of our gentle sex political events possess but little interest; but this is not the case with all: there are many of my readers, I am sure, who are quite *au courant* with all the questions of the day, and to them the following details may not be devoid of interest. A few evenings since, in one of the *salons* where weekly may be found united the notabilities of Paris, I observed two ladies, whose great beauty and settled look of melancholy immediately attracted my attention. I soon remarked that this feeling was universal—all were anxious to know who they were. I made it a point to seek out our kind hostess, from whom I learned they were the victims of Austrian brutality—they were the wife and mother of a Venetian nobleman, now languishing in one of Francis Joseph's dungeons. During the late campaign, the husband, wife, and mother were in Venice; the young man, fired with patriotism, and ready to sacrifice all he held most dear that Italy might be free, in an unguarded moment allowed his sympathy for the allies to transpire. An Austrian spy overheard his ardent aspirings; that night he was torn from his home, and for weeks his unhappy relations knew nothing of his whereabouts; they were not even certain that he still lived; but at last they ascertained that he, with many others, was confined in one of the State prisons near Vienna. Upon receipt of this intelligence, the unhappy ladies at once departed for

that capital. They wished to appeal to the clemency of the Austrian monarch. For six long weeks they remained in Vienna making ineffectual attempts to reach the ears of his Majesty; though high in rank, and possessing a large fortune, they were Venetians, and consequently failure met them at every renewed attempt. At last a happy thought entered the mind of the mother. She determined to appeal to the generous victor of Francis Joseph, the Emperor Napoleon III. Report told her that never had he turned a deaf ear to the supplications of the unhappy—she would appeal to him, asking his interference, well knowing that a request from him would meet with due attention. So leaving Vienna they hastened to Paris: they have already had one interview, and I am assured that the Emperor listened to the appeal of these poor women with the greatest kindness, promising to use his influence in their behalf. This promise restored the hopes which had almost abandoned the noble Venetian and her daughter. They well know that the Emperor Napoleon always keeps his word. Their presence at the *réunion* I have mentioned is thus accounted for: the daughter, suffering from months of depression and anxiety, required the stimulating influence of such heartfelt sympathy as the mother knew she would surely meet at the hospitable mansion of Madame de B——.

Since the return of the Court, the weather has been so unfavourable that their Majesties have not ridden out as often as usual. The Empress is said to be looking quite strong and healthy; before her departure she was looking very pale and thin. I saw the little Prince the other day; he is a fine pretty boy, full of spirits. He has, it is said, an irresistible desire to fight all his playfellows; his father's well-known expression, "*L'Empire, c'est la paix*," has, it appears, but little effect on the young Monseigneur. Young Master Con-

neau, son of the Emperor's favourite physician, is the recipient of the Prince's pugilistic essays. The question in dispute between them is, which shall be the other's groom; and as neither is inclined to yield, battles ensue forthwith. Youth does not bow to rank, and the consequence is that his Imperial Highness is not always victorious.

The Palace of Versailles deserves a visit now, even from those who have seen many times the curious works of art collected there. The bed-chamber of Louis XIV. has just been again thrown open to the public, after undergoing a complete renovation. Every portion of the furniture has been carefully restored, especially the bed on which the *grand monarque* breathed his last. The bedstead, regarded in those days as a wonder of art, and which is still considered a curious and beautiful object, was made by Simon Delobel, who worked at it for twelve years. On the bed is a coverlid embroidered by the ladies of St. Cyr. During the troubles of the Revolution, this fine specimen of embroidery was carried off into Germany, and repurchased by King Louis Philippe. Two pictures, representing the Holy Family, on each side of the bed, have been cleaned. The ceiling, which is one of Paul Veronese's finest works, and was brought from Venice by Napoleon I., is in perfect preservation. Several beautiful chairs, and a *prie-dieu*, or kneeling-stool, are also works of art which deserve especial attention. Now that the cold weather is coming on, the beautiful park and fine gardens of Versailles are less attractive; but the inside of the magnificent building has been so entirely renovated, so many fine military tableaux by Yvon, and other celebrated modern artists, have been added to the already large collection, that in proportion as the outside attractions cease those of the inside augment.

It is remarked here as extraordinary, that many English

families are selling off their furniture and leaving Paris. Alarmists attribute this flight to fears of war and invasion; this is a sad mistake. All these English people are leaving Paris because it is getting to be so expensive a place as to render it impossible for persons of limited incomes to enjoy such comforts as they did up to the present time. Rents have risen in a most fabulous manner. Even on the fifth floor one must pay from £160 to £200 a-year for apartments that ranged five years ago from £60 to £70. This change is so irksome as to entirely chase off many families who have for years resided in Paris. The journals are filled with notices of sales of furniture; and we are always informed that it belongs to an Engiish family leaving Paris. The fact is, so much tearing-down of buildings is now going on, so many whole streets are being demolished, that numberless large families are constantly on the look-out for apartments; and the rents have attained a figure that must soon be reduced, or else none but the most wealthy will be able to reside in this gay capital. In spite of these drawbacks, the number of strangers that come to Paris during the winter season is annually on the increase; the citizens—those to the manner born—find themselves obliged to give way before the invasion of Russians, Austrians, Germans, Americans, Italians, Spaniards, Turks, Persians, Armenians, and even negroes, whom we meet at every turn, and in all places of amusement.

An ingenious Parisian stationer, who for some years past has taken up his abode at Shanghai, has returned to Paris, bringing with him a curious Chinese invention. This extraordinary discovery consists in the composition of a paper which can be made to last as long as one wishes, by the use of a water or *eau magique*. The paper must be beforehand prepared by some means known only to the buyer

and seller, and is then saturated with the water, which is colourless, tasteless, and scentless. The length of time that one desires the paper to last is regulated by the introduction of pure water to weaken the effect. For instance, if the paper is to be decomposed within six days, the *eau magique* is put on without adulteration; if a month, a certain quantity of pure water is to be used. With this paper, then, the wily Chinese write their *billets doux*, taking care, however that the corrosive water and the passion shall be of the same weight. The water is called "Divine Ink," and the paper "Exquisite Prudence." If Divine Ink and Exquisite Prudence take up their permanent abode in civilised countries, what a death blow it will be to all breaches of promises, &c. The jealous husband has seen his wife conceal a rose-tinted *billet* in her private secretary-draw; half an hour after he forces the lock, and finds a few fragments of dust of charred bits of paper. And then, again, how many dishonest persons would sign promissory notes, knowing that, thanks to the *encre divine*, their signatures would soon disappear; in fact such an invention is a most dangerous one, reversing the present order of things, and opening a wide field for rascality; so down with the *eau magique*, say I.

P.S.—I open my letter to give you the *dénouement* of the affair of the ladies who appealed to the Emperor, in behalf of the imprisoned son and husband. I have heard that the young nobleman has just arrived here. The interposition of the Emperor was at once successful; and now the poor ladies must be as happy in proportion as their grief was sincere and heartfelt. I am looking while I write these few lines, at a large print of his Majesty that hangs before me, and I consider him much handsomer than I ever did before. May this kind action be returned to him a thousand fold!

LETTER XXIV.

The Operatic World—A Visit to the Modiste—Noble Newspaper Contributors—Hints on Dress to English Ladies in Paris.

Paris, Wednesday, October 26, 1859.

On Saturday (the fashionable opera night) was presented, for the first time this season, Verdi's much-admired *Rigoletto*. This opera, which was pronounced by Verdi himself to be his *chef d'œuvre*, had always been a favourite in Paris, and the fact of a *débutante* appearing in it, perhaps added to the general desire to be present last Saturday. Mdlle. Dottini created a favourable impression. As she has appeared in London, a description of her voice and appearance is unnecessary. In the *duo*, in the second act, with Graziani, who took the part of the Court Jester, she quite astonished the audience, as during the whole of the first act fear prevented the young lady letting her voice out. Gardoni, as the Duke, was all that could be desired. This artist had it announced that he was rather indisposed; but no one would have imagined it, for his sweet and manly voice was as pure and *degagée* as ever. Never has Gardoni appeared to better advantage. He gave the public a bold and animated portraiture of the libertine Duke, while his handsome face and figure, combined with his really excellent voice, roused even the apathetic audience of the Italiens into applauding most boisterously. If Gardoni continues to throw as much animation into all his *rôles* as he did into that of the Duke, he will console even the most inconsolable of the Mario mourners. Graziani played and sang the part of the unfortunate Jester most touchingly; his deep notes of tenderness and heartfelt

pathos produced a wonderful effect; his voice seems to be richer, if possible, than it was last season. Alboni, in the insignificant part of Maddelena, was much applauded. The *rôle* is not good enough for her; it is a waste of luxury to hear her in so poor a part. At the Vaudeville, Madle. Bressant, daughter of the best comedian on the Paris stage, has made her first appearance in a new piece called *Les Dettes de Cœur*. Nothing in the young lady's manner, voice, or acting would have caused any one to suppose that it was her *début*, for she trod the boards as though she had been acting constantly for years. Her father's excellent tuition, joined to natural talent for the stage, is, of course, the reason of this ease; and with beauty, a sweet voice, and the *prestige* of her well-known name, Mdlle. Bressant will be sure to succeed. The piece, which is written by the famed *collaborateur* of Alexandre Dumas, senior, Auguste Maquet, is deeply interesting, and although rather bordering on the dramatic for the Vaudeville, promises to become one of the most popular of M. Maquet's numerous productions. At the Porte St. Martin, *La Reine Margot*, an historical drama, by the same author, has been reproduced with all the accustomed splendour of scenery, &c. Mdme. Doche, the actress who played the Dame aux Camelias, at the Vaudeville, plays Margot. The magnificence of her dresses makes up for her acting, which is detestable. It is a matter of surprise to me how so miserable an actress could have gained the reputation for excellence in the histrionic art that she has. Her awkward gestures, her forced bass voice, render her personation of Marguerite of Navarre ridiculous in the extreme. At the Opéra Comique the *Pardon de Ploërmel* has been reproduced with the original cast—this, with the *Songe d'une Nuit d'Eté*, on the off-nights, suffices to draw crowds to this immense theatre. The com-

panies of the Vaudeville, péra Comique, and Français Theatres, have been ordered to appear before the Court at Compiègne; the pieces selected are—*Le Mariage de Figaro*, by the Français company; *Le Songe d'un Nuit d'Eté*, by that of the Opéra Comique; and *Les Dettes de Cœur*, by the Vaudeville. Madame Ugalde, the favourite singer at the Lyrique, has been taking unto herself "a partner of her toils, her feelings, and her fame." The happy bridegroom is named M. Varcollier. To show that it is not always interest and a great name which cause pieces to be accepted by the extremely particular judges of the Theatre Français, the cherished (and justly so) M. Scribe has just read to that body a comedy in three acts, which was only received on condition of its being altered. M. Scribe took this decision in good part. He has since withdrawn the piece, declaring, with the best possible grace, that the reading which he had given had made him of the same opinion as those who had partially condemned the piece. It must have required courage to refuse or find fault with the production of the celebrated M. Scribe.

Since my last letter, I have been making a regular pilgrimage into all the fine cloak and bonnet shops in Paris. I do not mention this because it is an extraordinary circumstance for me—far from it; besides the amount of shopping which is required to keep my own wardrobe not *too far* behind the fashion, I am constantly performing the part of interpreter, bargainer, explainer, refuser, or accepter for numberless cousins, aunts, distant relations, and no relations—those fiends (I beg their pardon—*friends*) who invariably drop down upon you when you are extremely busy, and beg you to run out with them for a few moments to give them the benefit of your experience in something they are going to buy; which something, if it happens to tear, wear out, or fade at the end of ten years' time, you are

blamed for inwardly, if not openly; but once in a while it is a pleasure to do this, and so it has been with me during the past week. My friend and I (a friend with the *r* I mean now), were *à la recherche* of a winter cloak—something warm, heavy, and, at the same time, rich enough to do away with the disagreeable feeling of being *shabbily dressed* that one has with a cloth cloak usually. We went to Gagelin's, and found nothing to suit us; we then remembered that Gagelin's head man and *première demoiselle* had formed a matrimonial as well as business alliance, had left Gagelin and set up for themselves in the Rue de la Paix. We soon found that here the difficulty would be not that there was nothing to please us, but that everything pleased us—the last shown being prettier than its predecessor, and so on. Brown is the favourite colour for cloaks this year, black is rather sombre, and grey will not be at all *bien porté;* the prices, more reasonable than Gagelin's, ranged from six to ten pounds, according to the fineness of the cloth or workmanship. My friend chose a beauty, composed of brown cloth, which they call velvet cloth in France—very large sleeves, around which was placed a trimming of black velvet — the velvet being beautifully *soutaché*, with black silk braid. Same trimming down the front of the cloak, which was very long and of the sack shape; in fact, all cloaks, to be in the *mode*, must have sleeves—long and wide are those most in vogue; though I saw some with sleeves almost closed with the *revers;* but cloth is too thick a material for this shape. The velvet cloaks at Worth's, (for such is the name of the proprietor of this large establishment), were most beautiful. So many varied forms, so many and pleasing designs in trimming, that one cannot describe the effect they produce—they must be seen, or at least an engraving of them. Worth also makes dresses; and oh! such

dresses! Really these people do not get half the credit they deserve; for it must require an inventive genius and an extended imagination to get up such beautiful things, which if they were directed in another channel would be declared wonderful; but Worth and others of the stitch-craft know they have the sympathies and appreciation of the ladies. Worth is an Englishman—the French call him M. Voss. *En effet*, the *W* and *th* coming together makes it rather an uncomfortable word for them. I advise ladies coming to Paris to go to Worth's. I think it is Number 7, Rue de la Paix, on the first floor. I dislike naming tradespeople, but sometimes it is a convenience; a *Chroniqueuse* for the *Patrie*, one of the leading papers here, who signs herself the Vicomtesse de Renneville, composes her letters entirely of names of shops, so that her *chronique* is nothing more nor less than a string of addresses — and yet Mdme. La Vicomtesse de Renneville is considered *très spirituelle*.

My lady readers will be, perhaps, surprised at so high-sounding a name belonging to a newspaper contributor; but Madame la Vicomtesse de Renneville is not the only titled (?) person belonging to the Paris press. Several penny papers are edited by countesses. Many of the *feuilletonistes* are counts or barons; in fact, every person who can get his writings published, considers himself entitled to any grand name he happens to think of. The French law is strict in regard to assuming titles; but these persons say it is their *nom dè plume*, and they therefore cannot be interferred with. In the meantime, they get known by these titles or rather *noms de plume*, and all the glory of having a fine name is enjoyed by this ingenious method.

Will you permit me to say a word or two as regards dressing to English ladies? Why do they, when in Paris—

the gayest of capitals and the most dressy—why, I repeat, do they dress themselves, nine times out of ten, as though they were among barbarians? Travelling gowns of coarse stuffs are all well enough for the steamers, railways, and coaches, but not for the crowded Boulevards or Champs Elysées, where all the ladies that one meets (except Englishwomen) are tastefully and richly dressed. How plain, alongside of these, appear English girls, who, with ten times more natural beauty, seem so ugly with their poke bonnets, ugly and coarse stuff gowns that cling to the figure, while the little short jackets, add to the uncouthness of the *tout ensemble!* "As badly dressed as an *Anglaise,*" has got to be a proverb among the Parisians; and surely they are right. Let me advise them to wear things that are suited to their complexion: this is the secret of a good toilette. To some, one colour is becoming; to others it is not; this is what English girls should study. Purple bonnets, green dresses, and pink parasols, form a combination far from elegant. These varieties of colours seem to charm the rosy-cheeked English girls who abound in the streets of Paris. Why! I actually saw, the other day, walking on the Boulevard, an English lady, wearing a fine mauve velvet shawl, or rather mantle, with a yellow cotton fringe! As the Paris ladies passed by the person I speak of, they could not refrain from an expressive shrug of the shoulder. Let me say again, that travelling dresses are for steamers and railways. No other ladies, except the English, thus transgress all the rules of toilette. They alone look awkward and badly-dressed everywhere except at home; and I take the liberty of calling their attention to the fact. I am well aware that it is a great trouble to change one's dress when but a short time is to be passed in a place, but to do so is to pay an indirect compliment to the people we are among; not to

The *salle* which has been consumed was very magnificent, the ceiling being decorated with paintings from the ancient masters, while the walls were of carved oak of elaborate workmanship. Fortunately (almost miraculously) the gorgeously decorated throne-room was uninjured; the gallery of paintings of living artists (containing the *chef d'œurves* of Couture, Boulanger, Gerome, Rosa Bonheur, &c.), was also untouched. The senate Chamber is to be immediately and thoroughly restored. No place has as yet been assigned for the meeting of the Senate.

Protestant churches are being built by degrees all over France. Some time ago I mentioned the erection of one at Nantes; I now hear that the English residents and visitors at Biarritz have decided on building a Protestant Church at this favourite Imperial bathing-place. The ground has been bought, and the good work is to be commenced without delay. My informant adds, without mentioning to what sect he belongs, that an English clergyman has already arrived for the service of this temple. The Empress's Chapel, the *Sainte Eugénie*, is to receive decorations exterior and interior, to be made with the greatest care. During the absence of their Majesties this Catholic chapel is kept open for the benefit of the fishermen and women residents of the village. During the residence of the Imperial family, it is private.

The Galway steamer brings us the intelligence that General Floyd has been appointed by President Buchanan to the post of Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court of the Tuileries. Some information regarding the new *diplomate* may not be uninteresting. He was born in the State of Virginia, and was for some years representative of that State in Congress; he has also been Governor of the State, and fulfilled his governatorial duties with credit. Latterly he was appointed

by President Buchanan, Secretary of War. During my stay in the United States I had the pleasure of meeting General Floyd in Washington, at the President's levees, and at other *réunions.* His affability of manner and great intelligence render him an universal favourite. Some of the Paris journals, in mentioning his appointment to his new post, seem to be under the impression that he was named by the President after receipt of the news of Mr. Mason's death; this is an error —General Floyd was appointed ambassador by the President, who intended to recall Mr. Mason. As little more than a fortnight has elapsed since the demise of the late Minister, it is impossible that the news should have reached the United States, and that a consequent appointment should be known here. Americans in Paris, will no doubt, be pleased at the appointment of General Floyd, as during the last few years, Mr. Mason's ill-health prevented his country-people making the embassy a place of *réunion.* General Floyd's hold of office will be a brilliant one, as his private fortune is sufficient to allow him to do honour to his post—which the salary of itself would not. Persons of all nations abroad take great pride in their Embassy. This is a proper feeling, and should be encouraged, but when Ministers are so poorly paid as by the U.S. Government, the Embassy is a source of pain and not pleasure.

I have noticed as a remarkable fact this winter, that the lady *habitués* of the Italiens and the Académie de Musique, or Grand Opéra, make much less *toilette* than was formerly the case. Even on the grandest *représentations* we see our most noted belles wearing high-necked dresses, and even sometimes bonnets. Looking around the fine *salle* one sees that not more than half the ladies are *en toilette habillée.* Five years ago it would have been considered a *manque de savoir-vivre* to

appear at the Italiens in *demi-toilette*. But Fashion has queer vagaries, and her laws of to-day are contradicted by those of to-morrow; and as ladies must dress finely, if they do not do so at the Opera they will find some other place to display a falling shoulder or a rounded form. A few nights since I dropped in to see the second act of the *Pardon of Ploërmel*, at the Opéra Comique, and observed that with but one notable exception, the *loges* were filled with ladies *en toilette de promenade*. The exception I refer to was a brilliant one—in a front *loge* sat a party of English ladies, who seemed floating in gossamer, and whose classic heads gave incontestable signs of having been under the skilful hands of Felix, hairdresser to her Majesty, or some other equally celebrated *artiste*. (You are aware, no doubt, that in Paris hair-dressers claim that high-sounding qualification.) Variegated burnouses were half falling, half clinging to the uncovered shoulders, adding by their brilliant tints to the *éclat* which surrounded the party. This was very fine, but I saw by the perplexed looks of my fair country-women that they felt they were "alone in their glory." A few seasons back every *loge* would have been filled with equally well-dressed occupants, but according to present custom these ladies were overdressed, consequently attracted attention which is certainly very unpleasant. I regret that fine dressing should be discontinued at the Italiens and Grand Opéra; it gives a *prestige* to any theatre when the auditory is composed of well-dressed ladies, and then the gentlemen (even those who look the blackest when bills are presented), are obliged to confess that during the long *entr'actes* nothing is more pleasing than to inspect the different toilettes and different jewels of different ladies of rank and beauty. "How beautiful Mrs. So-and-so looked in such a dress!" "How becoming that head-dress was to Miss

Such-an-one!"—are we to hear these remarks no more? Certainly not in France, if the present no-dress movement continues. So *Vive la toilette!* at least for the Opera.

But as much as the present turn of affairs as regards dress in Paris is to be deprecated, in like proportion must we regret the extent to which dress is carried in London. Even in the minor theatres, we see young ladies wearing low-necked dresses, and decked out with opera cloaks. I must relate to you my experience in the matter. A short time since, I returned to London after a prolonged continental tour, during which I had imbibed the customs of the countries I was visiting. A few days after my arrival I was induced by some very young cousins to accompany them to Astley's Amphitheatre, a place of amusement I had never visited. Forgetting that I was in London I wore my bonnet. I was much surprised when about entering our box, to find the usher intercepting me. "Please ma'am," said he, "take off your bonnet; ladies can't wear 'em in the theatre." Surprised at this request—the more so as my "back hair" was somewhat disordered owing to a violent romp with a three-year-old. just after dinner, I begged leave to retain the obnoxious bonnet; but all in vain, the man had received strict orders, and I was obliged to doff the article in dispute. I was unable to ascertain whether this general uncovering was done as a mark of respect for the clown or the horses. Seriously speaking, how absurd such rules appear to one accustomed to the *sans-gêne* of continental life. That one should be forced to go uncovered to a circus, is the height of ridicule.

As many members of the Orleans family are now residing in England, the following anecdote may prove of interest. The day after the battle of Palestro, a young officer belonging to the Sardinian cavalry, whose duty it was to transport the

Austrian prisoners to a place of safe keeping, presented himself to Colonel Chabron, of the 3rd Regiment of Zouaves, to receive his orders. The colonel, surprised at the purity of the young officer's French, asked him where he was born. "I am a Frenchman, replied the sub-lieutenant. "What is your name?" demanded the Colonel. "De Chartres, *mon Colonel.*" Seeing surprise depicted on the Colonel's countenance at the mention of the name, he added, "I am the son of the Duke of Orleans." Having received his orders he withdrew. The Colonel, who relates this anecdote, says that he was much touched by the simplicity and gentle bearing of this young prince, who has already suffered such cruel reverses.

This story recalls to my mind an anecdote related to me a few weeks since, by an American statesman, the Hon. Robert C. Winthrop. Twelve years ago, this gentleman was in London, and was invited to luncheon at the house of Miss Coutts. Besides the lady hostess and himself, there was but one other guest—Prince Louis Napoleon, just then escaped from the prison at Ham. During the past summer, Mr. Winthrop was again in London, and again partook of luncheon with Miss Coutts. Again there was but one other guest—the Comte de Paris! What a strange coincidence, and how great a proof of the mutability of human affairs!

The Emperor, Empress, and Prince Impérial leave St. Cloud this afternoon, for the Palace at Compiègne. An unlimited credit has been granted for their reception by the municipality of that place, and what with triumphal arches, patriotic inscriptions, and grand illuminations, the inhabitants of the little town of Compiègne will have great scope for showing their loyalty. Among the guests for the first week at this fine Imperial residence, are Lord and Lady Cowley.

It is said that the Palace has undergone such entire reparations as to make it assume a degree of magnificence it never had before; among the rooms distinguished for the beauty and taste of its arrangement is the *Salle des Gardes.* This spacious and richly-decorated apartment has been embellished with ten superb panoplies of chased steel, inlaid with gold and silver. They represent the armour worn by the knights of the middle ages in France, Spain, England, Germany, &c., also two suits of Oriental armour. The whole of these pieces are grouped with much taste; the arms, defensive and offensive, which were then used, radiating from each armour. In addition to the always great attraction of a *séjour* at Compiègne, the invited guests will have the benefit, this year, of the magnificent English gardens laid out in the forest of Pierrefonds. My readers will remember that Cardinal Richelieu, to cripple the power of the mighty lords of Pierrefonds, caused the solid massive stone walls that surround the castle to be split down to the earth. These walls, by order of the Emperor, have been rebuilt; and such has been the care bestowed upon the work that it is impossible to know the new from the ancient stone. A corrosive substance which has been applied gives to the new portion the time-worn, mouldering appearance of the old wall.

Yesterday was "La Toussaint," or All Saints' Day, and Paris was *en fête.* The shops were all closed, and the merry grisettes and artizans filled the streets after the High-mass in the morning. The day is a day of rest—of amusement as well as holiness—to them. Mingling with a crowd of persons of the lower-class in France does not produce that feeling of discomfort that like contact does in England; here the women with their clean white caps and aprons, the men with their blue blouses, do not

present the aspect of wretched poverty that the corresponding men and women do in London. And then their conversation is always laughing and to a certain degree *spirituel*. A Frenchman does not know what it is to be sullen; he is either angry or pleased. And how happy they are on a *fête* day. The French certainly enjoy life more than any other people.

A few evenings since I saw in one of our most frequented *salons* the Duke and Duchess of M——. I observed that the young lady looked careworn; lines were perceptible in her countenance, which was, when I last saw her (before the marriage), fair and smooth. As she moved listlessly around the spacious rooms I wondered whether she regretted her barter of youth and beauty for a ducal coronet. I have heard it asserted that the old marshal, her husband, is rough and somewhat brutal in his manner to her, and I fear that the high-toned, delicate woman is wearing away in the struggle she has brought upon herself. I have once or twice referred to *mariages de convenance* that so often occur in France, and have regretted their frequency. I fear that the young Duchess de M. is another proof against a custom that is really a most cruel one. One sees in the Paris *salons* or ball-rooms, fair young creatures clinging to the arms of men who are old enough to be fathers, and in many instances, grandfathers, to the well-dressed, bejewelled beauties; and a pang of pain most real is felt when one learns that the persons in question are man and wife. Oh, Mammon! truly thou art most powerful, and bitter is thy reign!

LETTER XXVI.

Stag Hunt at Compiègne—A Discourse on Crinoline—Miss Martineau Taken to Task—Visit of the Grand-Duchess Marie of Russia to Paris—The Festivities at Compiègne—Restoration of the Cathedral of St. Denis—The Theatrical World—A New Branch of Industry: Husbands Beware!

Paris, Wednesday, Nov. 9, 1859.

HEARING that there was to be a grand stag-hunt at Compiègne on Friday, I roused myself at a horribly early hour in order to get to the Chemin de Fer du Nord in time for the 9.15 A.M. train. After a sleepy ride of two hours, I arrived at Compiègne, and after breakfast proceeded to the meet—the Puits du Roi. The Emperor was not present, but the Empress appeared about one o'clock, followed by the guests of the Palace. Her Majesty wore a charming hunting costume, composed of green cloth and gold. The Princess Anna Murat was also most becomingly dressed. This fair-haired cousin of the Emperor is a beautiful creature; one could almost swear (but ladies do not swear) that the Princess was a fresh young English girl; she has all the Saxon characteristics. I was much disappointed to find that the Empress did not accompany the party to the hunt, but returned immediately to the Palace. The hunters started, and soon found a fine ten-antlered stag, which was killed after a splendid run of an hour. At night the *curée* took place, but I confess I left Compiègne immediately I found their Majesties were not going to the hunt. I intend visiting Compiègne for the next hunt; and shall give my readers a detailed description of the chateau, its guests, and surroundings.

The Empress, it is said, is to appear at Compiègne in dresses made after her Majesty's own idea, and if she decides in favour of them, no other style will be used this winter by the fashionables. Crinolines, so say those to whom the distinguished lady deigns to communicate her ideas, are to be totally abolished. Woollen stuffs are to be worn entirely for out-door dress, while all robes are to be made short, that is, to touch the ankle. Whether this style of dress will take or not, remains to be seen. In the meantime, let us leave to those who can afford to make these expensive experiments, the privilege of deciding what will be becoming. For myself, I must confess, that the lovely and graceful Eugénie herself will, in my eyes, lose much of her dignity if she adopts the short, ungraceful dress which she proposes. I remember, last year at Biarritz, that the first time I saw her Majesty in the little hat, the tucked-up *piqué* dress, and the Balmoral petticoat and boots, I could scarcely divest myself of the idea that it was not the same queenlike creature who, but two months before, had graciously saluted me on my presentation. The long-flowing, ample robe, the magnificent diamond crown, had impressed me far less than the dignity of manner, combined with that heavenly expression of face, the stately carriage, in all "every inch" an Empress! Here was the lovely face, the beauteous form, the delicate hands and feet; but the sweeping dignity had vanished. What was the cause? None other than the difference of dress. But if crinoline is abolished, what a triumph for people with antediluvian ideas on dress. Miss Martineau, for instance—why, her article on this subject in "Once a Week" proves that she, at least, has never worn a crinoline. She says: "The prodigious weight of the modern petticoat, and the difficulty of getting it all into the waistband, creates a



necessity for compressing and loading the waist in a manner most injurious to health." All my lady readers will agree with me when I declare this to be an egregious mistake; a crinoline gives more *tournure* than half-a-dozen stiffly-starched petticoats. That Miss Martineau is writing in the dark will be evident to all ladies who use crinolines. We are all aware that they have a waistband, fitting as comfortably as that of any other petticoat. I meet in my daily rambles an old gentleman, who wears tight-kneed breeches, powders his hair, and dons a long-tailed, high-collared coat, dating back to the days of the Restoration. I am firmly persuaded that this relic of former times has as much objection to the present style of dress for gentlemen as is evinced by good old Miss Martineau against crinolines. She does not know the comfort of one on a hot summer's day, or she would not rail at them.

The Grand-Duchess Marie of Leuchtenberg has arrived at the Hotel du Louvre. Her Imperial Highness is invited to Compiègne, and leaves on the 20th. This Princess is employing her stay in Paris in visiting the different places of interest in the capital. The day before yesterday the Hotel Cluny, that depository of so many interesting relics of the middle ages, was honoured by a visit of her Highness of Russia. The Emperor has placed several of the Imperial equipages at her disposal, and has detached one of his aides-de-camp to attend upon her Highness during her stay in Paris. Yesterday, the Grand-Duchess was expected at the Hotel des Invalides, but knowing probably that it was the intention of the Emperor to visit her, the Princes and Princesses, children to her Highness, went alone to the Invalides. An interesting sight was furnished to them; twenty-four soldiers who served in Italy from 1805 to 1814, under the

orders of the Prince Viceroy, were assembled in the Refectory. These veterans had been brought together because the Grand-Duchess had expressed a desire to see the companions in arms of her father-in-law. The Emperor arrived in Paris from Compiègne at half-past two, and entered the gate of the Grand Hotel du Louvre at ten minutes to three on a visit to the Grand-Duchess. His Majesty was in a small covered carriage, without the slightest escort; but the crowd soon discovered their sovereign, in spite of the modesty of the equipage, and forthwith set up the eternal shout for his long life and health, which by this time must have become perfectly insupportable to his Imperial ears.

A little before four o'clock the Emperor paid a visit to Prince Jérome at the Palais Royal. His Imperial Highness is still ill, though they say he is recovering slowly. After this visit the Emperor entered the Palace of the Tuileries, but left in time for the five o'clock train for Compiègne. Last Sunday all the guests of the first series of invitations bade adieu to their Majesties, and left for Paris in a special train; the second series of *invités* arrived in the afternoon of the same day. Among other guests of their Majesties are Lord and Lady Strafford, Count and Countess Walewski, and the Prince and Princess Czartoriski. The Duchess de Malakhoff, with the Duke, have also passed a week at Compiègne with their Majesties.

The young Prince Napoleon Bonaparte, son of the Prince de Canino, who was lately married at Rome to the Princess Ruspoli, has arrived in Paris with his bride. The age of the Prince is twenty, and that of the Princess, seventeen.

All my readers who have been in Paris have no doubt visited the magnificent Cathedral of St. Denis—the last resting-place of French Royalty. Extensive works are to be

executed there; a superb monument is to be erected to the Emperor Napoleon I.—below the transept is to be constructed a vault for the Napoleonian dynasty; all the rich tombs which are now piled up in the damp vaults of the crypt, are to be replaced in the choir and the nave; all the paintings are to be removed from the pillars, the ogives, the chapels, and the walls round the choir, in order to give them again the decoration of the middle ages, of which one or two chapels still remaining intact will serve as models; and lastly, to rebuild the two small spires over the principal entrance. These improvements will make the already magnificent Cathedral one of the most interesting in the world, though I should think having a vault constructed for the Napoleonian dynasty would make the Emperor feel rather lugubrious.

We have had several novelties in the theatrical line during the past week. At the Italiens, Madame Borghi-Mamo has made her *rentrée* in the *Barbiere di Seviglia*, and was much applauded by her old admirers. Gardoni sang *à ravir* in this opera; his soft delicate notes are admirable in the serenade. At the Français, the *Duc Job*, a new comedy, has created a very favourable impression. The fine comedian, Got, plays the principal character; his personation has contributed in a great measure to the success of the play. At the Odeon, *Le Passé d'une Femme* has met with some rather severe criticism, but seems to please the general audience. Novelty is all they care for—they will go to the theatre, and only desire to see something new. The Variétés has produced a new piece called *Monsieur Jules*, which was laughed at, and so is a success.

A branch of industry exists in Paris which I am sure has never been thought of in England. The following story will explain this singular mode of gaining a livelihood: The land-

lord of one of the houses near the Boulevards had, as lodgers, an old man and his daughter; the father was an *employé* at one of the ministries, to which place he went every morning, and only returned in the evening; during the day the young girl amused herself in feeding her birds and watering the flowers which decorated their modest apartment. One day the old man fell ill, and as the rent-day was approaching, the kind-hearted landlord called upon the daughter and said, "Mademoiselle, your father has been ill for some time now, and I know that he no longer receives his monthly salary—do not trouble yourself about the rent—you will pay it the next quarter, or the next, if you like; I cannot bear to think that, combined to the grief that your father's illness occasions you, should be added uneasiness about money." "Thank you a thousand times, Monsieur; fortunately, I have no need of your kind offer. My father's salary is stopped, but then, I earn enough to keep us both." "*You* earn—why I never see you at work," said the gentleman. "Not in the day-time, 'tis true, but in the evening I am constantly employed." "Would it be an indiscretion to ask you what you do?" said the landlord. "I am an *avançeuse d'ouvrage*" (an advancer of work). "And what, pray, is that?" "Why, you see, Monsieur, there are an immense number of ladies who begin all sorts of fancy-work, crochet, worsted work, or knitting and such things, on which they work in the evening—sometimes when the husband goes out to the club, the opera, or any other place to which Madame does not happen to accompany him; the lady, perhaps, has an engagement of her own, to which, as soon as Monsieur is out of the house, she flies; the fancy work is brought to me, or I go and fetch it, and the next morning, bright and early, I take it back. After breakfast Madame exhibits triumphantly her work of the evening

before, and Monsieur praises her industry, never dreaming that Madame was amusing herself, and that other hands have made the evident progress in the work." The landlord retired, greatly astonished at the lengths which female (Parisian) intellect attains, and determined for the future to keep a strict eye upon his own wife, for fear of her employing an *avançeuse d'ouvrage.*

LETTER XXVII.

The Coming Season in Paris—Fashionable Arrangements—A Good Word for the Crinoline—The Queen and the Soldier-Artist—The Disabled Tenor—The Schiller Festival in Paris—Singular Trial for Poisoning—The Empress's Fête Day—Imperial Visitors in Paris—New Russian Organ in Paris—Acquittal of the Prisoner for the Theft of M. Hua's Child—General Scott's Mission to San Juan.

Paris, Wednesday, November 16, 1859.

OUR fashionable season has begun in earnest, and I shall soon have ample matter for my weekly letter, giving you the details of the Court receptions, balls, and concerts, as well as those that are given by Ministers and members of the *Corps Diplomatique.* Those even the most wedded to the pleasures of country life, must return soon; and, once all the absentees back, Paris will each night revel and dance to sweet strains, while beautiful women, from North, South, East, and West, will gaily and gracefully glide through the season, each contributing her share to the universal holiday. I say holiday, because in the winter months Paris is filled with pleasure-seekers all anxious to enjoy the manifold amusements here

furnished to Fortune's favourites. It would seem as though they were determined to drain to the dregs the cup of pleasure, and nought that French ingenuity can invent is left undone to satisfy these cravings. Magnificent equipages filled with gaily-dressed women roll along the Champs Elysées and the avenues of the Bois de Boulogne, while at night we find our operas and *salons* crowded with the beauty and wit which the world contributes to the demands of the Parisian season. The fair daughter of the North exhibits her rounded shoulders and blonde hair in the same *salon* where we admire the dark flashing eye and graceful supple form of the child of the sunny South. They are all here—England, Russia, Austria, Germany, Italy, Spain, in fact, all the world is represented in a *réunion* in the *salons* of our *élite*; and wealth, that great ruler of us all, lends its aid to magnify and decorate this assemblage of the great and the powerful of all lands. A Parisian *salon* cannot be equalled in this respect, for Paris is the centre of fashion. Here the Goddess of Pleasure has erected her temple, and here must come her worshippers.

Last winter, the Countess de Morny, as well as the Countess Walewski and Mme. Fould, wife of the Minister of State, gave each a masked ball. They were all so successful that it is said these leaders of the *ton* intend to give a series of masquerades this winter, at which no one will be admitted unless in fancy dress. At the Tuileries there will be two masked balls during the season, both of which are to be unusually magnificent. These rumoured pleasures have been spoken of since it has become a settled fact that Prince Jérome has quite recovered from the dangerous illness that had lately attacked his Highness. After the January reception there will be a ball given at the Tuileries each fortnight. We are also to have several balls given at the Hôtel de Ville,

upon which occasion the scene presented is one that baffles description. Many of my readers have, I dare say, attended balls at the Hôtel de Ville, and all will agree with me, when I say that their splendour and magnificence are unrivalled, and that one's dreams of fairy land are there realised.

But what, one naturally asks, is to be the fashion for dresses this winter? For the moment it is impossible to reply. It cannot be that the dresses reaching but to the ankle will find their way into the ballroom; that the *corsages* are getting shorter and shorter waisted is beyond dispute—in fact, when

"I look into the future, far as human eye can see,"

the unpleasing spectacle of the unbecoming modes of the First Empire is presented to my gaze. Are we then to be led to the slaughter like innocent lambs, and forced to desert the long crinoline, the long flowing skirt, and well-adjusted corsage? Ladies, to the rescue! Down with the efforts of the novelty-seeking French *marchandes*, who, for the sake of the credit of a new idea, and the hope of base gain, would force upon us an unbecoming costume. Liberty and crinoline for ever.

A pretty story is told by the Lyons journals of an act of benevolence, done by the Queen of Holland, who has lately been sojourning in that town. In passing through the Musée one might daily see a young soldier, who occupied in copying the old masters, the hours of leisure which his service allowed him. He was terminating a remarkable copy of a Murillo, when a foreign lady approached and asked him where he acquired his taste for painting. He told her that he had received lessons from Horace Vernet, but being unfortunate enough to draw an unlucky number in the *Conscription*, and

too poor to purchase a substitute, he bore his fate patiently, determining to devote as much time as possible to the cherished art. The fair stranger asked the soldier how much he expected to get for the picture he had just finished; upon his naming the price, the lady said "*C'est bien*, I will give you double that sum." The delighted artist-soldier inquired the name of his benefactress, who laughingly answered, "Send your picture to the Queen of Holland, who is determined to find a way which will allow you to give yourself up exclusively to the perfection of the art for which you have so decided and charming a talent." The illustrious lady has kept her promise, it is said, and the grateful artist is now no longer obliged to perform the military duties which were so irksome to him, whose whole delight was in the culture of the art, in pursuance of which he met the noble Queen, who has shown herself as generous and sympathetic as she is beautiful and accomplished.

In the *salons* of our music-loving fashionables, Roger, the unfortunate tenor who lost his arm by an accident this summer, is still the topic of conversation. It was asserted that Roger had rehearsed his *rôle* in the *Reine de Chypre* (in which he fights a duel) without the slightest difficulty, and that that opera would soon be produced at the Académie. This, it appears, is not so; Roger has come up from his country house but once since the accident. He is to have a benefit at the theatre, the scene of his former triumphs, and it was to speak of this that Roger came up to Paris. It is said that the tenor is rather disappointed in the mechanical arm which has been made for him, but Charriere, as a proof of the perfection to which he has carried these false members, introduced to Roger a gentleman who took off and put on his hat, carried a stick, used knife and fork

&c., the said gentleman having a false arm. Roger was much moved and delighted at the perfect ease with which the arm was used.

The Schiller festival given in the Cirque de l'Impératrice attracted an immense crowd, your correspondent among the number. After a great deal of crowding and elbow-punching, I contrived to get a seat, in which I remained four mortal hours listening to hoarse singers, discordant instruments, cries of babies, and growls of parents. The immense circus was a cold as any circus would be in the middle of November without any fire, and situated in an open space like the Champs Elysées. During the delicious intervals when the hoarse ladies with the dreadful German names were not singing, I amused myself decyphering a German programme, which was generously distributed to the audience, who for the most part knew as little of that mellifluous tongue as I do of the mode of conversation used by South Sea Islanders. After a little brain-cudgelling, and the assistance of a German gentleman, upon whom I bestowed as many gracious smiles as my freezing situation would permit, being intensely delighted at my managing to understand nearly all he said, I read the programme, whose heading was as follows: "Fête given in honour of the birth of Schiller in the Cirque de l'Impératrice." Just as I was about to break out into a fit of laughter at the idea of Schiller's being born in the Cirque de l'Impératrice, two horrible realities forced themselves upon me; one was, that the German gentleman whom I fondly supposed had been conversing with me in his native tongue, had been using a sort of *mélange* of English and French, which rudely set aside my self-satisfied idea of being a linguist; the other was, that I was getting very hoarse. I had caught cold, which of all the petty "ills that flesh is heir

to," is to me the most unbearable. Although the receipts were large, the Schiller festival was not, on the whole, satisfactory, and I doubt much if a hundred years hence there will be so numerous an auditory—certainly not if I were consulted. I must not forget a fine march by Meyerbeer, which is worthy, in every way, of the great composer's reputation; but which, on the evening in question, was evidently performed after too few rehearsals, for there was certainly a want of accord, from time to time, among the performers. The receipts of the festival amounted to 20,000f., and the expenditure to 14,000f.

A singular case has been tried here, which shows the danger arising from the use of rouge and powder. An actor, named Darny, was attacked some weeks ago, while performing at the Odéon, with violent colics, and the symptoms of poisoning; having consulted a physician, the latter came to the conclusion that the powder Darny used contained poison. As several other actors and actresses have suffered in the same way, a complaint was made against two perfumers, named Fay and Madame Dasse, who have just been tried for selling pearl powder in which there was carbonate of lead. In addition to Darny, several performers of the Palais Royal Theatre stated that they had suffered from the use of the defendant's powder. Certificates were put in from other actresses, declaring that they had used it without inconvenience; but as, however, chemists declared that it contained poison, the tribunal condemned the defendants each to three months imprisonment and 500f. fine.

Yesterday (15th), was the Empress's *fête* day. The theatres in Paris were all illuminated last night, but owing to the absence of their Majesties, the *fête* was not so thoroughly observed as it would otherwise have been. Many

private charities were bestowed by order of her Majesty, and a number of children admitted into different schools and academies at the expense of her Majesty.

The Grand-Duchess of Leuchtenberg is still in Paris; she visited yesterday the Palais de Justice. Her Highness was accompanied by her eldest son, aged ten years, and her two daughters; one of these, the Princess Marie, is the most beautiful child I ever saw. The Prefect de Police was waiting in the *Cour d'honneur* to receive her Highness, who, accompanied by him, visited the Sainte Chapelle and the Conciergerie. In the latter place the Duchess entered the dungeon of Marie Antoinette, which was also visited by the Grand-Duke Constantine when he was last in Paris.

Speaking of the Grand-Duke reminds me that a new Russian organ, *La Gazette du Nord*, which has just appeared in Paris, publishes a most interesting journal of the voyage lately made by his Imperial Highness. The author was in the Duke's suite, and is the editor of the *Gazette*. Captain de Rumine, the person in question, intends, so say my gentlemen acquaintances who talk politics, to show up to all Europe, in his journal, the Russian people, their institutions and customs, under the impression that when better known they will be better liked.

You will remember that some weeks since I mentioned the theft of M. Hua's child, and the consequent agitation which prevailed in Paris. As all your readers are aware, the woman who stole the child was arrested in Orleans and brought to Paris for trial. I am sure you will be as much astonished as I was upon hearing that the jury acquitted the woman, upon the ground that she was not a responsible agent, having committed the crime while under the influence of hysteria. She is now at large, and may, I suppose, walk

into the Tuilerise and strangle the first babe she meets, and hysteria would again be at fault. Truly the ways of Justice are mysterious.

Your readers are doubtless all aware of the fact that Lieutenant-General Scott, Commander-in-Chief of the United States forces, has been sent by President Buchanan to San Juan, to settle matters between General Harney, who has taken possession of that island, and Governor Douglas, Her Majesty's Representative in British Columbia. The American General, going, I suppose, upon the principle that possession is nine points in the law, at once put some of his men upon the island of San Juan, and claimed it in the name of the United States. Governor Douglas refused to allow this claim, and now the matter is being considered by the American and English Cabinets. All Americans look upon General Scott's mission as one of Peace; let us hope he may succeed in carrying out his instructions in such a manner that the world may not have the spectacle of a quarrel or struggle between two nations speaking the same language and having the same great God-given mission of civilization and progress. A few evenings since, I was with a number of mutual friends in the *salon* of Mrs. Lieutenant-General Scott. This lady has for many years resided in Paris. During the course of the evening, one of the persons present found in Mrs. Scott's album the following lines addressed by her to her husband. I was struck by the tone and sentiments of these most opportune verses, and begged permission to send them to you—in fact, I may say I triumphantly bore them off. Your readers will allow me to explain that General Scott left New York *en route* for California in the steamer Star of the West. The lines will possess additional value, if only from the fact that, save to the General to whom they are addressed and the few

friends present the evening in question, they are as yet unknown.

"Oh, Star of the West! throw thy radiance benign,
Unchanging and strong, on the warrior's way!
May the waves that surround him, through favour divine,
Be as lustrous and calm as thine own cheering ray!

'The hero of many a battle' goes now
More joyfully forth on a mission of peace;
Oh, Star of the West! be the prototype, thou,
Of success, whose pure blessings shall never surcease.

God prosper the barque that hath borrowed thy name;
Supplications heart-born to His throne are addressed,
For the good and the brave and the pious who claim
Our devotion, our prayers, in the 'Star of the West.'

They go all unarmed (save with holiest views),
The ills of ambition and strife to arrest,
For the spirit of St. John (loved apostle) imbues
Hearts now seeking his isle in the 'Star of the West.'

Unarmed they will land mid contention and wrath,
But on high 'tis ordained that 'peacemakers be blest;'
They will follow once more their long, long ocean path,
And regain their own shores with the 'Star of the West.'

Sail on, gallant Scott! true disciple of Virtue!
Whose justice and faith every danger will breast;
Avert the sad conflict—Heaven will not desert you;
There are angels on guard round the 'Star of the West.'"

LETTER XXVIII.

Festivities at Compiègne—The Empress Eugénie in a New Character—Amiability of Her Majesty—Theatrical News—The Latest Fashions—French Feeling towards England.

Paris, Wednesday, November 23, 1859.

THE festivities at Campiègne have reached their zenith. The Grand-Duchess Marie of Leuchtenberg left the Hotel du Louvre, yesterday, for the Imperial residence. Prince and Princess Metternich, who were included in the first list of visitors, have returned by special invitation of their Majesties. The companies of the Gymnase, Odéon, and Vaudeville Theatres have all performed before the Court this week. The *comédie de salon*, or private theatricals, have also been much in vogue this season. M. Octave Feuillet, the celebrated writer, now visiting at the château, was requested by the Empress to write a *proverbe*. The author of the "Jeune Homme Pauvre" instantly complied, and produced, it is said, the most spiritual of all his pieces of this kind. It so pleased the Empress that her Majesty herself honoured the author by performing the principal part in the presence of her guests.* It is said that the Empress did this, as she does everything, most charmingly; but I must confess that in my opinion it was a *manque de dignite* in her Majesty, which surprised me extremely. The *rôle* of Sovereign is a difficult enough one to perform, without attempting those in comedies. The Dowager Empress of Russia, now at Nice, has been invited by the Emperor to pass some time at the Tuileries, after her return from the south of France. The Emperor of Russia has sent a special despatch to the Emperor Napoleon,

* The piece is called "Le Portrait de la Marquise."



thanking him for the extreme kindness shown by himself and the Empress to the Grand-Duchess now visiting Compiègne.

I have heard a little anecdote which shows that the charity of the Empress is most unostentatious. A few days ago, when their Majesties were walking in the *forêt* with their guests, a little girl of about nine or ten years of age, neatly, but poorly clad, met the Imperial party; on perceiving the Empress the child gave a shout of joy, rushed up frantically and threw her arms around her Majesty's neck. The Empress returned the embrace, and then inquired kindly after the child's mother. "She is better," said the little girl, "and often wonders when you are coming to see us, *chère dame*." "I shall come soon," said the Empress, smiling; "give her this for me, and now *au revoir*." The ladies and gentleman of the party were anxious to know how the Empress could have discovered those poor people, who lived quite at the extremity of the town of Compiègne, without the people themselves knowing who was their benefactress; they afterwards found out that the Empress was in the habit of rising at an early hour and going quite unattended into the poor quarters of the town and distributing alms to those in distress. Ever since her first visit to Compiègne she has done this, and had it not been for the accidental meeting of the little girl, who explained to the ladies and gentlemen that the "lady," pointing to the Empress, had been a *bon ange* to them and to many others in the village, this act of charity would have remained unknown. It is said that the Emperor, on the discovery of his noble spouse's generosity of heart, kissed her hand in presence of all the guests, and declared that every day developed some new and charming trait in the amiable Eugénie.

At the Lyrique we are having Gluck's fine opera *Orphée*,

with Madame Viardot in the principal part. Mademoiselle Sax, a pupil of Madame Ugalde, takes the part of Eurydice. This Mademoiselle Sax has a fine voice, and has improved wonderfully since her first appearance at the Lyrique. Monsieur Carvalho, manager at the theatre, heard this young person singing at one of the free concert-rooms on the Boulevards; struck with her voice, he offered her a situation at the Lyrique, at which theatre she made her first appearance as the Countess Almaviva in *Les Noces de Figaro*—no small undertaking for a *débutante*, especially as Mademoiselle Duprez had made an immense hit in the same part. She succeeded, however, and may be regarded as one of the fixed favourites of the Lyrique audience. At the Italiens, *Rigoletto* has been repeated, with Morini as the libertine Duke, instead of Gardoni. The change is not an agreeable one to the *habitués* of the Italiens, although I suppose it is done to relieve Gardoni, who has been singing constantly since the opening of the theatre. A Madlle. Dottini, who plays the jester's daughter, came very near being whistled at—that being the Parisian mode of hissing—in her cavatina, for although in the duo with Graziani she passes muster, during the rest of the opera she is frightful. Madlle. Dottini is said to be a French lady of large fortune, who, for the pleasure of seeing the audience of the Italiens yawn and smile while she is singing, pays Monsieur Calzado a nightly sum. If she has any perception at all, the last performance of *Rigoletto* will suffice to show her how utterly unfit she is for the task she has taken upon herself. At the Bouffes, the long-expected *Geneviève de Brabant* has at last been produced. Like all French pieces of this class, *Geneviève de Brabant* possesses no literary merit, though the amusing incidents and sprightly music will doubtless ensure it a long run. A song expressive of the emo-



tions attendant upon gambling is well sung by Madlle. Nautin. This sprightly little actress plays five characters in the piece. Madlle. Mareschal, who personates Geneviève, is a handsome woman and wears some magnificient costumes, especially the last, which is composed of scarlet velvet and gold, while on her head is placed a beautiful crown, a perfect imitation of one which for centuries has formed part of the Crown jewels of France.

Her Highness the Grand-Duchess Marie, accompanied by the Duke de Leuchtenberg, honoured the Bouffes with their presence on the second representation of this new piece. I was present on the same occasion, and sat immediately next to her Highness, and consequently had an excellent view of her. She has rather a handsome face, but is decidedly inclined to *embonpoint.* When in the course of the piece they danced the everlasting *galop infernal* her Imperial Highness forgot that all eyes were upon her, and gave herself up to a fit of laughter, the heartiness of which the meanest of us might envy.

I can scarcely mention anything new as regards dresses, but in *lingèrie* we have some novelties, or rather old fashions revived, a description of which may prove of interest to the ladies. For morning and visiting collars, the fashionable *lingères* are making us small *all-rounders,* in exact imitation of those worn by the gentlemen; they are very becoming. The sleeve to be worn with this is exactly like a gentleman's shirt sleeve, and cuff falling over the hand, and not turned back in the usual style. Both sleeves and collar are made of linen. Another pretty style is the *col à revers.* To use this shape the dress must be cut open in the front; the collar has lappets, which turn over, leaving the neck slightly exposed. To avoid taking cold while adopting this pretty

collar, the ladies tie about their necks a cravat, made of white muslin and trimmed with a deep Valenciennes. The bow and ends fit in exactly where the collar is open, and the effect is light and becoming. I must mention that with the first collar must be worn a cravat again like those of the gentlemen, called, I think, in London the "tubular tie." I advise all your lady readers to try this collar; it is extremely becoming,, though when it was first described to me I fancied it could not be very lady-like; on inspection I find it is, however. They are trying very hard to bring into fashion the coloured stockings so much used in England, but the ladies here are afraid of adopting them on account of its rendering them conspicuous. They are very much worn by the Empress and her ladies at Compiègne, but for walking on the Boulevards with them requires a fixed determination not to be stared out of countenance.

Among the French families of my acquaintance, the greater portion possess some male member who belongs to the army. These persons are now in the hurry of getting ready for the expedition to China; it is quite extraordinary to observe the willingness and gaiety with which they prepare for this distant expedition, to a land which is hardly known to them. They seem to be glad, however, that the English are to go with them; in fact, wherever I go among the French I hear constant expressions of goodwill towards our people. The French say they cannot understand why, just at the very moment that the English are better appreciated and liked than ever before in France, our leading morning journals should keep up such a continuous cry about a French invasion. I heard it plainly hinted, the other day, and that too by a political personage, that the object of the *Times* and *Herald* was to excite unjust indignation towards France, which would

pardon an invasion upon that country by England. This, however, is a political intricacy which ladies fortunately need not torment themselves about, leaving to their wiser better halves the task of settling matters. Settle them amicably, gentlemen, for war is disastrous to both parties; leaving even the victor weakened and reduced.

LETTER XXIX.

Imperial Doings at Compiègne—Crinoline Doomed at last—A Russian Princess's Ball Dress—A Word on the Latest Fashions—Operatic Novelties—The Pomp of Royalty laid aside.

Paris, Wednesday, November 30, 1859.

THAT the day fixed for the return of the Court is near at hand is evident from the army of servants and workmen who may be seen every day at the Tuileries laying down carpets, hanging curtains, brushing, dusting, painting, &c. Luggage vans are also disgorging their precious contents into the Grande Cour d'Honneur, while from thence they are transferred into the different rooms of the Palace. Although the Tuileries is very gorgeous, their Imperial Majesties must certainly regret their home-like and comfortable Compiègne, with its cosy rooms and lovely gardens. A grand theatrical representation was given at that place a few nights ago. A new piece, called *Les Petites Mains*, was acted by the performers of the Vaudeville. The *Salle de Spectacle* at Compiègne is not very large, but is handsome, being richly hung with red silk and gold. There is no Imperial box—the Emperor, Empress, and Imperial family being seated opposite the stage in the

balcon—to the right and left of them are the ladies and gentlemen, invited guests of their Majesties, and as many others as have the good fortune to possess that useful article, a friend at Court, who manages to get them a seat. In the tier above are the wives of the functionaries and magistrates. In the seats highest of all are the non-commissioned officers of the garrison of Compiègne, and part of the Imperial household. The doors open at eight for the public, while at half-past the Court enters. This is the signal for a general rising, but no acclamation, and when the Emperor and Empress are seated everybody sits. It is Count Bacchiochi who assigns his place to each guest, and everything is done without the slightest noise or confusion. A grand sight it is when the whole company has arrived and are seated. First there is the "beauteous Majesty" of France, Eugénie; then the Imperial cousins, the newly-wedded bride from Sardinia; representatives of most of those noble houses from our own dear isle; wealth, beauty, and fashion from all countries; but to me by far the most attractive object then assembled within that hall of gaiety, are the cold blue eyes, the melancholy smile, the unchanging countenance—upon which the emotions of within are never reflected—of the far-sighted, clear-thinking Napoleon, Emperor of the French. The Queen of Holland, who is accounted one of the *esprit-forts* of Europe, was asked why she was so silent and seemingly embarrassed in the presence of the Emperor, the Queen *naïvely* replied, "I am afraid of him!" About the middle of the performance refreshments are handed to all the guests, even to those in the orchestra, stalls, and pit. The piece went off well, and a magnificent supper was served to the *artistes* in the fine dining hall. When the performance has given especial pleasure, the Emperor and Empress enter and compliment the actors on

the excellent manner in which they have acquitted themselves. Sometimes, but rarely, their Majesties send the next day some handsome present to the fortunate performer who has pleased in his acting. Thus it is said that Dupuis, of the Gymnase, has several fine presents, many set in precious stones, received from their Majesties; while Bressant, of the Français, has a portrait of the Emperor, entirely surrounded with large diamonds of the first water.

It appears that the Imperial fiat has gone forth as regards crinoline, as I observe some of our *elégantes* already walking up and down the Champs Elysées, like Dorothy Draggletail, performing the ignominious office of streetsweeper, with silks at twelve shillings a yard. Rather an expensive broom, you will say, but "*que voulez vous*," these ladies must be in the fashion. In spite of this, I cannot help thinking that when the Empress returns to Paris, and resumes her sway as Empress of fashion, as well as the Empress of the country, she will repent of her hasty decree, and return again to the much-abused crinoline. The fact of several of the celebrated crinoline-makers taking out patents at the present moment, is also a favourable sign; and then the tulle ball dresses, which will be the *grande mode* again this year, how can they be worn without crinoline?

Speaking of these tulle ball dresses, I will take the liberty of describing one I saw yesterday at one of the grand dressmakers, destined for a Russian princess. The underslip was of white satin, over this was a skirt of tulle bouillonné, which was covered with a shower of golden stars, the corsage of the same. The dressmaker told me that the head-dress was composed of five stars set in diamonds; a large one in the centre, and diminishing in size at the sides! Imagine the effect of this toilette on a young and beautiful creature, that

creature possessing the additional lustre of being a princess, and this her toilette for the first ball after her marriage. Another destined for the same person was composed of tulle of a pale delicate water-green, the skirt made with large bouillonnés and looped up at irregular distances with branches of graceful hanging sea-weed—this was called very appropriately the "Naiad."

Gold braid is being extensively introduced into ladies's apparel this year; it first began with the Zouave jacket, and is now invading cloaks, dresses, and even bonnets; for cloaks it is not pretty—in the first place, it tarnishes quickly, and, in the second (to my idea), it has a *stagey* or theatrical look, which every lady with quiet tastes wishes to avoid. For dresses the same remark may be made—for the Zouave, the little house jacket for cold weather, it is lively, new, and coquettish. The *modiste* of the Princess Mathilde has sent her Imperial Highness the following bonnet, which is very rich and quite novel. The body of the bonnet is composed of black velvet embroidered with gold; on the left hand are placed two rosettes of black lace, a small gold chain falls from each of the rosettes, having at the end a small gold ball. The curtain and edge or border of the bonnet are made of white tulle, covered with a rich black lace; strings, black velvet embroidered with gold. I saw this bonnet made in another colour, which was much more elegant; the bonnet as well as the dress and cloak were of a rich claret colour, this, with gloves *beurre frais*, made one of the most beautiful carriage toilettes I ever saw. A handsome bonnet for a brunette was made of black velvet, the crown of gold-coloured satin quilted, covered with a handsome black lace curtain lined with yellow satin.

I am surprised to see the continued success of Gluck's

Orphée at the Lyrique. We all know that the music, though grand and imposing, is not at all calculated to suit the tastes of the masses, especially when those masses are composed of the sprightly, gay French people. In fact, to appreciate *Orphée* one must be a musician, and a thorough one; the ponderous melody has little effect on the untutored ear, while the total lack of dramatic action is a bad thing even in an opera. I could not repress a smile, on the night of the first representation, at the criticism of a musical heretic who sat near me; this gentleman declared, that if that were the style of music one heard in the infernal regions, he fully understood the popular objection to going there! The indisposition of Mdlle. Cordier has obliged the managers of the Opera Comique to postpone *Yvonne la Fermière*, the long talked of opera, of which the words are by M. Scribe, and the music by M. Limnander. It seems as if Scribe's brain would never stop bringing out Minerva-like pieces. It is an amusing thing to pick up an *Entr'acte* which has the bills of all the different theatres—Scribe's name is sure to be down as author to two or three different theatres, and I have in my possession an *Entr'acte* in which, on the same night, at every one of the principle theatres in Paris was performed something from the pen of M. Scribe. The rising dramatic authors say that Scribe has had enough glory, and should now stop, like Rossini, and repose upon his laurels, and so give a chance to younger men; but the thirst for fame, and perhaps gain, is too strong to be quickly resigned. At the Italiens, a piece called *Un Curioso Accidente* has been produced, and, as the bills announced it, a new opera from the fertile pen of Rossini, it has attracted great crowds. Rossini, however, who, it appears, has made up his mind to write no more, has addressed a letter to M. Calzado, in which he begs

that gentleman to remove from the bill the words, "New Opera by Rossini," and substitute "Opera, arranged by M. Berrotini on Morceaux by M. Rossini." The bill was, in consequence, changed in accordance with the desire of the favourite composer. This little incident will but give renewed interest to the piece, and the intimation in Rossini's letter, as to whether or not he has tne right to stop the representations, will bring all music lovers in crowds to see *Un Curioso Accidente.* The plot of the piece is, however, so slight, the music so unequal and disconnected, that in spite of being *morceaux* by Rossini, its success cannot be long lived. The name of the piece arises from a traveller, Don Roberto, who in mistake takes the valise of another traveller. In the valise Don Roberto finds a portrait of the *fiancée* of the other traveller, Count Altavilla; and Roberto, falling in love with the portrait, resolves to present himself to the lady as her intended, whom she has never seen. From this, of course, arises a great imbroglio, which is rather confusedly cleared up. A buffo air sung by Zucchini, a duo and a trio, were the only pieces that recalled to mind the composer of the immortal *Semiramide, Otello,* &c. Mdlle. Alboni sang, as usual, exquisitely in this—while Mddle. Cambardi was better than we are accustomed to see her. But although the singers exerted themselves to the utmost, general disappointment was felt.

The Grand Duchess of Russia has returned to Paris from Compiègne, having remained a week with their Majesties. Some amusement has been caused by the fact of her Imperial Highness visiting, as well as the first, all the second, and even third-rate theatres here; walking about town, instead of riding; in fact, laying aside entirely the pomp and pageantry of royalty, and assuming the manners and customs

of the *bourgeoisie*. Those intimate with the Duchess say that she declares that she has enough grandeur at home; that she has come here to amuse herself without restraint; and that she wishes to see the recreations of the poorer as well as those of the higher classes in the "gay capital of sunny France."

LETTER XXX.

Return of the Court to Paris—The Approaching Season—A Word on the Manners of French *v.* English Society—Theatrical Novelties—France's "Best Son" in Difficulties.

Paris, Wednesday, December 7, 1859.

On Sunday afternoon, at half-past three o'clock, the Imperial carriages, containing the Emperor, Empress, Prince Impérial and suite, entered the Tuileries by the reserved gate. A great crowd had assembled at the railway terminus, as also along the whole line to be taken by the *cortège*. Acclamations, waving of hats and hands, and welcoming smiles were heard and seen on all sides, while shouts of "Vive la Famille Impériale!" rang through the air. The Empress, smiling and gracious as ever, leaned her head out of the carriage-window to acknowledge the greeting. Her Majesty wore a pink silk bonnet, trimmed with black lace, a black velvet cloak, handsomely trimmed with fur, and a black silk dress, with pompadour flowers. To stop for hours to see a carriage pass hastily on such a day was indeed a compliment paid by the populace to their Sovereigns. Never in France have I experienced such biting cold, which, insinuating itself into the very bones, defied the efforts of all warm wrappings to keep it out. At the

Palace a number of distinguished persons were waiting to receive their Majesties; they, however, had a good fire to keep them warm, and only came to the door when told that the Imperial *cortège* was in view. The Empress seemed glad to see these persons, shaking hands cordially with many of them, while others were merely honoured with a bow and a gracious smile.

No Court-balls will take place till after New Year's Day, though, of course, the Empress will have a few private receptions. I confess to being an inveterate dancer, and consider it a sacred duty to attend every ball to which I am invited. Court-balls in France are my especial delight; besides the magnificent *coup d'œil* which is presented, and an excellent view of their Majesties, you have here a hall where you may dance unconstrainedly. No matter if you are a stranger and know few people, you are not for that forced to sit still the whole evening. It is perfectly *convenable* to dance with any young gentleman who asks you; you take his being there as a sufficient guarantee for his respectability: ladies speak to you without any introduction; and, in fine, when you go home and think over the party, and remember you knew not a soul when you entered, except dear papa who took you—(he looked very cross, at first, did papa; but when you returned to your seat, after a redowa with a handsome young officer with a light blue coat, and who may be a French duke or marquis for all you know, you were quite surprised to find papa laughing heartily at something that an old French gentleman was telling him)—when then, I say, you remember all this, you wonder why it is that you amused yourself more than perhaps at any ball you ever attended. Why is it? Because the French understand the art of enjoying themselves better than any other people; because they are inclined to think every one by



the side of whom they sit at a ball their equals, and not their inferiors; because there is none of that repulsive, humiliating turning up of noses, which is carried to such an absurd extent by the ladies of England, and faithfully, conscientiously, followed up and imitated by our pretty cousins of America. Why, I, who pretend to know many people in London, felt myself so entirely alone at Lady P——'s ball last spring (when I was in the great metropolis for a couple of days), that I inwardly determined to write some beautiful lines on the subject of solitude in a crowd, and have them published in *Punch*. Either the lines were not so beautiful as I fancied they would be, or the Editor of that journal thought the subject had been better treated by Byron, and consequently consigned my lines to the silent tomb: if the latter was the case it was a base injustice, as you will all allow. However, to return to Lady P.'s ball—the kind hostess greeted me as I entered, and I shook hands with several male and female heads of families. But this was not dancing; in fact the heat and crowd were so great that I wondered how that feat was to be accomplished. I was pushed; my beautiful tulle bouillons were crushed down till the whole dress looked as if it had been worn twenty times, instead of having just come from Roger's. At last, tired and separated from my party, I found a handsome easy chair, into which I sat. Oh, "what a mistake was there, my countrywomen!" My toes were now trod upon, my beautiful wreath wrenched off my head by some remorseless wretch's watch-chain. I would have forgiven him had he asked me to dance. I confess he looked at me, but then—*he had not been introduced.* I knew who he was, he ditto of me—all about each other's families, births, marriages, and deaths included—but that absurd meaningless ceremony of "Mrs. So-and-so," "Mr. So-and-

so," had not been gone through with, and so my only hope of a partner for a dance was extinguished. I know I am a rebellious subject, but we are too stiff in England: I maintain it. We are lively enough when we are among people whose ancestors we know all about; but we can't carry the pedigrees of every family in the United Kingdom in our heads, and therefore we treat Miss So-and-so, who is presented blushing to our imperial ladyships, to the turn-up of the nose before mentioned, or if we wish to be very gracious, a haughty bow! "Something too much of this." Put a little more *laisser aller* into your reunion; unbend your pompous dignity, *mes chères compatriotes*; let a little of the milk of human kindness flow from those truly warm and gentle hearts now frozen up by the strict mandates of ceremony; and, believe me, you will be quite as much respected as you now are, and much more beloved by some people, myself amongst the number. As a sequel to this little anecdote (which, I fear, from its being entirely personal will possess little interest for my readers), I will mention that the next day, in making my usual round of calls, I asked why such-an-one, naming a great many persons to whom I had been introduced and with whom I might have danced, were not at the ball. *Every body was there;* only the crowd, stern Fate, and my having sat down in the rose-coloured satin chair with a gold back, prevented my seeing them. Do you wonder that I speak in glowing terms of that fixed determination to make every one enjoy himself, willy nilly, which prevails in every French assembly, and, above all, the Court balls? To let you into a little secret, that most Imperial and Serene, but extremely aged, Highness Prince Jérome, hangs over my head like Damocles' sword. I always inquire *so* particularly after his precious health; he is seventy-nine, I believe, and ailing. If anything were to hap-

pen (which Heaven forefend!) no Court balls, no receptions. I groan in spirit at the thought.

The new comedy by Dumas *fils* called *Le Père Prodigue*, has had a *succès fou* at the Gymnase. This comedy, of which the last two acts are extremely dramatic, is perhaps the most *spirituel*, elegant, quiet, which has ever been presented to the public by this talented author. Throughout the whole five acts the running fire of wit never ceases, except when the grave imputation of being the lover of his son's wife is cast upon the handsome, noble, generous, prodigal father—the utterance of the one word "*infamie*" by the shocked, innocent, and loving parent, is in itself so thrilling, so lifelike, that it alone would cause the success of the piece. Dupuis, as the son, played with his usual excellence; youth, good looks, and energy, all lend their aid to make him one of the greatest favourites that ever appeared in Paris. Lafont played the Count de la Rivonnière as no other actor in Paris could have done: old and not old, gentlemanly, warm-hearted, and brave, in these different emotions he carries out to the life the author's idea. Rose Chéri is a good actress; but the character of Albertine is so repulsive that one unwittingly conceives a hatred towards the actress, who is merely repeating the words of the author, we should remember, not uttering sentiments of her own. The theatre was filled on the first night with all the beauty, the wit, the talent, the wealth—in a word, the *monde* of Paris, who clapped its gloved hands, and called for the author's name with its aristocratic voice with as much delight as the *habitués* of the Porte St. Martin, who have cheered a deeply dyed melodrama. By the way, at this latter theatre a new piece, called *La Tireuse de Cartes*, is about to be produced. This drama, though given out as the production of M. Victor Séjour, emanates in reality from a gentleman already

well known as one of the cleverest writers of the day. An intimate friend of the Emperor, a deeply read scholar, there is little doubt that this new work by Monsieur M., and called by him *La Tireuse de Cartes*, will have as much success as other works from the same gifted pen.

From the provincial journals we learn the important fact M. de Lamartine has left Macon for Paris. No purchaser having come forward for his estates, and the national subscription having only produced 160,000f. to pay nearly three millions of debts, the "Poet-child of France" was obliged to ask for time. Now time is money; and as he has asked for money from the French people, why should he not ask for time from his creditors? The author of "Jocelyn" thinks that he has conferred an inestimable blessing on mankind by the production of that book; consequently, after running through a couple of snug fortunes made by the sale of "Jocelyn" and other works, he gets into debt for three millions of francs, quietly hires an office in a fashionable street, and informs the obliged public that he will kindly allow them the privilege of subscribing their money to pay off his extravagances; and when the public is reprehensible enough to only subscribe 160,000f., the indignant poet writes an angry letter to a newspaper, in which he declares that France's best son is neglected. Alfred Tennyson, Charles Mackay, why deny yourselves coaches and four, shooting-boxes in the Highlands, town and country-houses, boxes at the Opera, fast horses, hunting-dogs, gambling, diamonds, &c.? You have written some pretty poetry—nay, beautiful—and the obliged English people should be made to pay your debts in return for the pleasure they have in reading your effusions.

LETTER XXXI.

Paris during the Frost—Prince of Orange at the Hotel Bristol—Preparations for New Year's Day—Demolition of another portion of Old Paris—Night Houses—Roger's Benefit at the Grand Opera—New Pieces at the Vaudeville and Opéra Comique.

Paris, Tuesday, December 20, 1859.

THE gay capital is frozen; the snow is lying several inches deep on the asphaltum *trottoirs* of the Champs Elysées; the magically gay Boulevards are icebound; the garden of the Tuileries, that charming resort of nurses and children, the admiration of all strangers, is desolate and forsaken. The Paris ladies, who never miss the noonday ride—the hardy English girls, who boast of a daily walk of —— miles (I leave my fair pedestrians to fill up the space according to their own respective talents in this way)—the listless *flaneur*, who spends a certain number of hours each day on the Boulevards and Champs Elysées—all are forced to stay at home. The shops, instead of having their doors invitingly open as is their wont, seem now hermetically sealed. The melancholy omnibuses, containing a few more melancholy fares, add to the desolation of the scene; in fact, so great, so sudden is the change, that gay, bustling Paris seems as if struck by the magic wand of a fairy, who had commanded the great city to sleep, till the handsome prince should come to wake her. Come, then, great prince, called by mortals the *Sun!* shed thy radiant beams upon us here, and with fiery kisses wake poor frozen Paris from her slumber!

The Prince of Orange, heir-apparent to the Crown of Holland, is at present in Paris. His Highness is staying at

the Hotel Bristol. He is served by the Emperor's servants, wearing the Imperial livery. The second story of the Hotel Bristol is at present occupied by the new Envoy from Sardinia, the Chevalier des Ambrois.

The stranger arriving in Paris at this time of the year is surprised at the few preparations made for that (with us) great ceremony, Christmas; while the London shopkeepers are putting forth their most tempting articles, arranging their windows in such a way as to inveigle the most stony-hearted into buying, the Paris ditto are comparatively lifeless. No extraordinarily beautiful objects may be seen just now, but if one could penetrate into those hidden *ateliers* from which emanate the articles which for their beauty have obtained a world-wide reputation, one might see busy hands and scheming heads all at work, devising novelties for the New Year. It is on the New Year presents are given, cards exchanged, gaiety prevails, all is life, fun, jollity! Have you not observed that the *concierge* has for the past week been particularly obliging to you; that Marie made you a delicious *sauce piquante* for dinner last night; that the milliner's girl dropped a peculiarly low courtesy as she handed you the love of a bonnet which you chose yesterday; have you not, in fact, remarked that all the world about the house has been kind, thoughtful, smiling, *empressé*, everything you could desire, even in your most impatient moments; do you not know, I ask, the cause of this? New Year's-day is approaching, and presents are expected.

Another portion of old Paris is about to be demolished in the Rues des Lavandières, St. Germain l'Auxerrois, du Chevalier-du-Guet; and thus light and air will at last be given to streets that before knew them not. The name of the Rue de l'Arche Pepin was derived from that of a family

well-known in the thirteenth century, one member of which was Provost of the Merchants under Philippe le Bel. The Rue du Chevalier-du-Guet was formerly part of the territory called Perrin Gosselin. That street and the place derived their appellations from a house which formed the residence of the Commandant of Night Police, or Chevalier-du-Guet, who enjoyed the prerogative of admission at any hour into the presence of the King to take orders direct from his Majesty's lips. The poet Guillot, who wrote in 1300, speaks of the Rue de la Sauverie, which took its name from a large salt warehouse in it. These little statistics give an idea of the ancient date of the building of these streets, which are now so soon to be destroyed.

While speaking of demolition, I may mention an order of police for closing night houses, given to several restaurant keepers in the vicinity of the Halles. These low drinking-places were allowed to remain open all night, on account of the convenience afforded to the market people. But some unfavourable disclosures having been made, the order above mentioned was given. These houses, into which one entered by a long and dark corridor, lighted by a miserable lamp, from which one emerged into a large room, on the floor of which might be seen lying pell mell vagabonds of all descriptions, still possess superior attractions in the culinary way to other establishments in the vicinity. On the window panes names and devices, traced in a delicate hand with diamonds, showed that it was not merely the resort of market people. One of the disclosures made to the police, was to the effect that a young man had committed suicide by hanging in one of these houses. In his pocket was found a sou and a piece of paper, on which was written, "I come to finish where I commenced." To some of these places there were no window

shutters, they having been kept open night and day for twenty years.

In spite of the intense cold, theatrical attractions have not been lacking this week. Perhaps the most important event in this line has been Roger's benefit at the Grand Opera. Never have I seen a representation at which so much personal feeling was manifested. Roger's great popularity, his fine voice, pleasing appearance, and above all his melancholy accident, sufficed to render the always sympathetic French people doubly so in his behalf. At an early hour the immense *salle* was quite full; from the magnificent decorated Imperial box bowed Eugénie's exquisite head, while her liege lord sat by her side. The boxes were filled with the wit, the beauty, the grace of Paris, and all went merry as a marriage bell, till "hush! hark!"—Roger appears, and there is universal silence. Evident as was his emotion (those who sat close to the stage affirmed that tears were coursing down his cheeks), never was the opening air of *La Dame Blanche* better given. At its close the applause was hearty and long; but when Georges came to the couplet—

"Mes bons amis croyez d'avance,
A ma reconnaissance,"

the singer advanced to the footlights, and to the singularly appropriate words was joined a gesture and an expression of face, so heartfelt, so sad, that the entire audience rose; cheers followed upon cheers, frantic shouts of approbation, wreaths of laurels were bestowed upon the favourite tenor; he raised his eyes to the Imperial box, the kind-hearted Eugénie expressed her sympathy by her gracious bows of encouragement; but of him, what shall I say? A singularly bewitching smile, but always the cold blue eyes, no excitement, no

emotion was visible in the countenance of the Majesty of France. At the Vaudeville, we have had Scribe's new comedy of *La Fille de Trente Ans.* It has been a success, partly to be attributed to the fine acting of Mdlle. Fargueil. This *artiste*, who possesses much of the fire and energy which characterised the great Rachel, has besides a decided talent for comedy; this is the reason that in the deceitful, caressing, loving, household serpent, *la fille de trente ans*, her impersonation is so life-like. At the Opera Comique, we have had a new three act piece, called *Don Gregorio*; a decided imitation of the fine Italian comedy, *l'Ajo Nell' imbarazzo*, it nevertheless abounds in fresh and lively melodies, which were admirably suited to the sweet and mellow, though not powerful, voices of Mdlles. Pannetrat and Lemercier.

LETTER XXXII.

Paris Besieged—Christmas Festivities—The Latest Fashions—Rain, Rain—Health of Prince Jérome—Preparing for the Empress's Reception—Wholesale Consumption of Bon Bons—Paris Improvements.

Paris, Wednesday, December 28, 1859.

Paris is perfectly besieged. Not alone people from every department of France are come to celebrate the Christmas fêtes in the capital, but strangers from every quarter of the globe flock the streets, and fill to overflowing the fine shops. The weather, which on Christmas and the Monday and Tuesday succeeding, was rainy, dark and uncomfortable, has this morning experienced a slight amelioration, and the consequence is that children of all ages are allowed by their

indulgent parents to walk up and down the Boulevards to see—Christmas. The usual little booths which from time immemorial, have at this season been placed on the Boulevards, were kept back for a day or two by the inclement weather; but they now flourish, to the great delight of the sturdy urchins who have been saving their *sous* for the last month to revel in the New Year's rejoicings. For those persons who have a great many sous to dispose of, *Giroux*, *Tahan*, and others, are ready with their lovely *objets d'art*, their intricate playthings, their fine *marqueterie*, to tempt them. As regards the exhibition of beautiful articles, Paris is certainly not to be equalled at this season of the year, and he who spends his Christmas holiday here, and does not find his bank account considerably diminished on leaving, must possess a strong heart or little artistic taste. The churches were most gorgeously decorated for Christmas—the Madeleine especially, was very handsome. The midnight mass was celebrated as usual with great ceremony, but I confess to not having witnessed it. It requires a very faithful follower indeed to leave the sports of the Mistletoe Bough, &c. which we still keep up just as if we were in our own country.

In a short time that *specialité* of Paris, the *bal masqués*, will begin—even now the *grisette's* busy hands are devising a new *débardeur* or *Titi* costume in which she will appear at the Opera the first ball night. In the winter, all is fun and jollity—in the summer, the city is a wonder of beauty. So, come at any time, when you will, or how you will, you will always find amusement in Paris. Just now, the theatres are crowded; the reviews are attracting those fond of jokes and rather pretty women in fine costumes; while the more serious theatres (if a theatre can be called serious) are producing either such novelties or such old favourites that they

are sure of drawing crowds. Giuglini, the tenor, is still "discoursing most excellent music" at the Italiens; the *Duc Job* with Got at the Français; Rossini's and Meyerbeer's Operas at the Académie de Musique; *Orphée* and *Faust* at the Lyrique; so you can understand why the theatres are crowded. A new piece, to which I have already referred, *La Tireuse de Cartes*, has been produced at the Forte St. Martin. The Emperor and Empress honoured the theatre with their presence on the night of the first representation, and at the end of the piece complimented the author on the success of his work. The three actresses who perform the principal *rôles* are persons of talent, and Mme. Marie Laurent, as the heroine, displays a higher degree of talent and energy than her previous performances would have led one to expect.

In fashions we have no striking novelties, although the fashionable dressmakers always make their dresses handsome, even if they are not in qeite new styles. I saw a handsome black watered silk yesterday, which was made in rather a novel way: there were four flounces of black velvet, about an eighth of a yard wide, set on in square plaits; each flounce was trimmed with a narrow black lace; sleeves, *à revers*—the *revers* being made of velvet, trimmed also with black lace. Another very rich dress was made of groseille-coloured *moire antique*—the skirt and body cut all in one piece. Up the front of the skirt was a fine trimming, grapes and leaves, embroidered with thick black embroidery silk, with jet beads interspersed to give effect; same trimming, but smaller, on the *corsage* and sleeves. I have seen some beautiful bonnets made for some of our principal *élégantes*; one, a white quilted satin, with a *mauve* velvet curtain and face trimmings, and a *mauve* and white feather fastened together with a bow of white blond on the left side; white

strings. Another composed entirely of dark green velvet, with a green satin curtain of a much lighter shade. There has been an effort made to bring in the bonnets *à la Marie Stuart*, that is, very wide on the sides, and a point, either of lace or velvet, falling on the forehead—but it does not seem to meet with much favour. The secret of this is, that the hair should also be dressed *à la Marie Stuart, i.e.*, turned off the face; many persons do not know this—to many this coiffure is not becoming, so with these several disadvantages it is hardly likely that the Marie Stuart chapeau will come much into vogue. A bonnet, which struck my fancy very much, the other day, when I was looking over Ode's (the Empress's milliner) novelties, was so entirely simple, that it seems hardly worth describing; yet the effect was so good, the bonnet itself so ladylike, simple, and yet rich, that I cannot resist explaining it to your readers. The whole bonnet, curtain and all, was composed of a delicate shade of violet-coloured velvet; no lace whatever on the outside; a long, white ostrich feather encircled the whole front of the bonnet, the curling ends falling over the *tours de tête;* across the top was placed a *ruche* of white satin, violet velvet strings. The bonnet was exquisite, and had been made to order for Madame G., the wife of the wealthy Russian, whose balls last winter rivalled in luxury those given at the Tuileries. Another simple and pretty bonnet, destined for the same lady, was of white satin, with a *fanchon* of black lace thrown carelessly over the top, the ends tying under the chin; the lace formed a point on the forehead, and another on the curtain.

But, alas! these beautiful bonnets are destined not to appear for some time to come—the rain, which had ceased when I began my letter, has commenced again with redoubled violence, and the barometer tells a most disheartening story

of rain, rain. How provoking to have such weather at this festive season; when everybody wants to deliver in person the compulsory (almost, in Paris), yearly present, it needs must rain in torrents; just as if that could not be done later in the new year, and not upon the very first day of it, when all the world and his wife wish to enjoy themselves.

I am happy to announce to you that Prince Jérome is convalescing slowly; no more bulletins will be published. The Emperor, who was untiring in his care and watchfulness by the side of his aged and suffering relative, now makes less lengthy and less frequent visits to him—a sure sign that the Prince is recovering.

The ladies of the *grand monde* are very busy just now; the Empress receives on the 2nd of January, and those who have the honour to approach her Majesty must appear in full Court dress; it is the only time during the year that the *manteau de cour* is *de rigeuer*. Some very splendid hues are now to be seen in the shop windows; those of the *Compagnie Lyonnaise* are the most attractive.

The number of bonbons given and eaten at this time of year is something quite frightful; some one has taken the pains to count the number of pounds sold: 600,000 kilogrammes is the figure—the kilogramme is 2lbs. avoirdupois. The doctors, of course, profit by this indulgence in sweets, and many is the poor little child who suffers a long fit of sickness which he owes to a fond but inconsiderate friend.

The long-talked-of demolitions are commencing in earnest; whole quarters composed of narrow dark streets are being done away with, and that happy creature, the Paris workman, will soon see himself lodged in a comfortable home, with lights and air to make his heart glad and his body healthy; and all this he owes to the Emperor Napoleon.

LETTER XXXIII.

Le Jour de l'An—English Travelling Costumes—The Promised Bal Masques—The Emperor and the Troops for China—Mons. Mocquard's New Play.

Paris, Friday, December 30, 1859.

THE gay capital of sunny France, although at present under a cloud, and consequently wet and muddy, is still wondrously busy and active. Carriages filled with fair (and unfair) ladies are constantly rattling along the Boulevards, the Rue de la Paix, and the Rue de Rivoli, stopping occasionally to allow the persons above referred to fill to repletion Giroux's, Tahan's, Susse's, and other like important shops, where fancy and most costly *articles de luxe* are to be bought. Le Jour de l'An approaches, and on that day in Paris everybody gives everybody else some present. So the streets and the shops are full, in spite of the drizzly and unpleasant rain that keeps on falling, as though cruelly oblivious that the New Year is close at hand, and that they are looking out for a general holiday. It is strange, yet pleasant, to see the long rows of little shops that are improvised along the line of the Boulevards and all the principal streets in the city during the holidays. Custom has rendered this usurpation of the space usually allotted to the *flaneurs* a thing that must be, and I must acknowledge that the young people of Paris seem to approve of these little booths or shops in the most heartfelt manner. Many an urchin looks at his hoard of sous with increasing delight as Christmas and New Year's day draw near. They know that soon the booths will be erected, and that an endless



variety of games, toys, gingerbread, and bon-bons will be displayed therein. At present crowds of children throng the streets, going slowly from one tempting show to the other, and the air rings with their gay, careless, happy laughter. You involuntarily join in their mirth—they look so joyous; their rosy cheeks and glittering eyes make you think of your own childhood, and fifty times a day the exclamation "God bless the children" rises to your lips. It is wonderful really to see the crowds that are constantly moving up and down the Boulevards—where do all these people come from? A great many have about them an unmistakeable John Bull appearance. The ladies, I am sorry to say, dress so badly, and in such horrid taste, that one always can tell them by their getting up. They forget that Paris is not a railway-carriage, and appear in all the unbecomingness of their travelling dress. It has come to be a custom here to censure bad taste in dressing by saying, "*Vous voilà mise comme une Anglaise.*" The reason is simply that our pretty country-women do not think it worth while to dress when away from home. This is an error, it is even impolite, for we are bound to shew some respect for the opinion of the people we are among. Many English ladies seem to think themselves absolved from all regard to personal appearances the moment they have crossed the Channel. This is a serious mistake, and one that brings upon us keen though not unkindly satire. To go about the city wearing poke bonnets or "uglies," wolsey dresses, and clogs may be comfortable, but it is really unsightly, and goes to shew that the wearers have no respect for the taste of the people among whom they sojourn, and yet from whom they profess to take their fashions.

I dwell upon this subject of dress because it is an important

one. Surely English ladies do not wish to bring ridicule upon the English nation. Yet such a result is accomplished by the carelessness to which I have referred. Walking along the Boulevards or Champs Elysées, you can tell an Englishwoman at a great distance. She is dressed in such a style that there is no mistaking her. Ladies from all parts of the Continent adopt Paris fashions as soon as they arrive here, and American ladies show a peculiar aptitude in becoming *des Parisiennes* as regards good taste in toilette. But English ladies show a total disregard for appearances when away from Regent-street. Of course there are exceptions to this rule, but I assure you there is too much foundation for my complaint, as many of your readers will bear witness to, I am sure. But let me return to a more pleasant subject. We are to have no end of balls, parties, masquerades, and concerts this season. Paris is to be gayer than ever, always providing that his aged Highness Prince Jérome keeps in good health. Were he to die, as it was feared he would last week, all the now expected festivities would not take place. But the Prince's physicians have issued their last bulletin, assuring the public that henceforth there will be no need of more, as his Highness is convalescent. You may rest assured that ardent desires for the continued good health of Prince Jérome are felt, not only by the pleasure-seekers that now abound in Paris, but especially by that class of *marchandes* who supply articles of luxury such as are in demand during *la saison*. A further proof of the complete restoration of Prince Jerome's health is the fact that the Emperor Napoleon is going for a couple of day's shooting to Fontainebleau. The Prince of Orange accompanies his Majesty. The Emperor's devotion to his aged relative is well known, and, were there the least doubt as to his recovery, the Emperor would not leave Paris. I hear

much mention made of a series of *bal masqués* that are to be given by the leaders of the *ton*, Mme. la Comtesse Walewski, Mme. de Morny, Mme. Fould, and so on. Last winter each of these ladies issued invitations to masquerades, which were so well attended and afforded such amusement, that the experiment was considered a highly successful one, and as a result we are to have a number of these delightful *bals* this winter. The Emperor and Empress seem to take much pleasure in such *réunions*, and it was noticed last season that they made it a point to attend them all. In fact, a most magnificent *bal costumé* was given at the Tuileries, and I have yet a vivid recollection of the magnificent dresses then worn, as well as of the spirit of gay good humour that prevailed.

While speaking of the Emperor, I must recount the following fact relative to his Majesty, which I heard from the best authority—the officer who was employed on the mission. Some days since the Emperor received information to the effect that one of the Government steamers at Brest was ready to sail for China, with three thousand soldiers on board. His Majesty at once sent a telegram, ordering that the vessel should not proceed to sea before having landed one-third of the troops packed in her. "My soldiers must not be uncomfortable" was the order of the Emperor. The steamer landed, according to his request, one-third of the troops, and then proceeded to sea. But before she started one of the Emperor's aides-de-camp arrived at Brest, whither he had been despatched by his Majesty. He made known that he wished all the officers that were going by the vessel that was soon to sail, to meet him before their departure. When united, the aide-de-camp addressed them as follows:—"Companions in arms—The Emperor wishes you all to make

known to me in what manner he can serve your interests or those of the friends you are leaving. He especially desires that none of you should depart leaving any care or sorrow behind him that the attention of his Majesty may alleviate." Not one of the brave fellows asked for money. Many of them made requests, having reference to their families, but not one asked for money. I am happy to state that the wishes of these brave officers have all been attended to by his Majesty, who little thought, I dare say, that his delicate kindness would ever be known.

During the last fortnight your journals have had much to say as regards Monsieur Mocquard, the Emperor's secretary. That gentleman has just given the Parisians another opportunity of talking *à son égard*. He has written a drama, in five acts, now being played with immense success at the Théâtre de la Porte St. Martin. The play is called *La Tireuse de Cartes*, and is founded upon the Mortara affair, that created so great an excitement a few months past. The principal *rôle* is that of the Jewess, whose daughter is taken from her while quite young by a female, who vows the little one to some Saint, and makes her a Christian. The bereaved mother determines to devote all her energies to the recovery of her child, and for that purpose becomes money-lender and fortune-teller, both excellent means for discovering family secrets. *La Tireuse de Cartes* is an austere drama; love plays but a secondary part in it—at least sentimental love; but the whole hinges upon a mother's affection for her offspring. The holiest, most sincere, and ardent passion that the heart can conceive is depicted by the author of *La Tireuse de Cartes*—maternal love. There are three magnificent female *rôles* in the new drama—that of the real mother; the one that has adopted the child; and the maiden herself, who in the fourth

act is seen struggling between the two mothers. At one moment she listens to the voice of nature; then she turns to the mother that has cared for her and tenderly loved her since her infancy. The two mothers implore and beseech the poor girl to choose between them, and at last she, from the violence of emotion, faints, and, when brought to life again, is insane. The force of this scene is absolutely terrific, and produces a most painful effect upon the audience. In the last act we see the two mothers reproaching themselves with having thus destroyed the object of their love. Their mutual sorrow draws them nearer to each other, and they deplore together the fate of their loved one. The crazed maiden hears the sound of the church bells, and stops to listen. A hymn is sung, which seems to open the fountain of her tears, and, falling upon her knees, she prays. Her senses are recovered, and she is to dwell for the future both with her real and adopted mother. The drama ends by a most beautiful appeal for the extinction of all hatred, the pardon of offences, and universal charity and love. Nothing can excel the grandeur of thought and language throughout this new and most popular drama. It is looked upon as quite a political event, and may be considered, I suppose, as a very big stone thrown *dans le jardin du Pape*. Owing to the political importance given to the new play, it is to be reproduced in Germany, and it will, I dare say, be translated into English. Its high and elevated tone will make it succeed in any language or any country. The authors, M. Mocquard and M. Victor Séjour, deserve the highest praise for having produced a moral, and, at the same time, most effective drama, at a time when play writers are writing *down*, instead of keeping up the high tone that should be used when working for the public.

At the Italian Opera there is nothing of great importance

going on. The *habitués* are looking anxiously forward to the time when Tamberlik will begin his short engagement. Mme. Vestvali has appeared at the Académie de Musique, in a new *rôle* in *Herculaneum*, but without decided success. The Opéra Comique, strong in the possession of such a tenor as Montaubry, goes on its way rejoicing, and gives us *Fra Diavolo*, and a host of such well-known, but ever popular, comic operas. The other theatres are now giving their burlesque "Revues," and those who like fun and laughter can be served to their heart's content. I must acknowledge that these reviews take most decidedly the *pas* of our pantomimes, usually so devoid of wit, and so full of kicks, cuffs, and stale jokes. In the French "Revues" all the principal events of the past year, political, musical, and even commercial, are touched upon with an *esprit* that is really charming. One can but make one objection to these yearly reviews, and that is, the unnecessary display of the persons of the females, and the occasional broadness of the dialogue. But I suppose one must take things as they are. Still, to English ears, the most racy of these jokes are offensive and out of place.

I shall, in my next letter, have some interesting details as regards Paris fashions, and shall soon be enabled to give you the particulars of the Court balls, receptions, and concerts, as well as of the many imposing ceremonies that are attendant upon the opening of the Chamber of Deputies, Corps Législatif, and other bodies of the State.

LETTER XXXIV.

The Imperial Court—The "Reception" by the Empress—The Forthcoming Court Balls—The Last Hour of the Octroi—Theatrical Novelties and Fashions.

Paris, Thursday, January 5, 1860.

THE rain which has been falling mercilessly for the past ten days has at length ceased; the *trottoirs*, though still covered with the tenacious Paris mud, now give back the sound of busy and of lounging feet. All is life, activity, and bustle. Although the momentous 1st of January is past, the shops are still crowded with anxious purchasers; but the little booths on the Boulevards are already beginning to diminish in numbers, although some of the more determined vendors will not remove their unsightly stalls before a week's time. It is time this custom of making the Boulevards hideous, just at the season when they should present their most charming aspect, should stop. "'Tis a consummation devoutly to be wished," and one that cannot fail to come, as the owners of the booths complain more and more bitterly every year of the poorness of their receipts.

The receptions on the 1st and 2nd January by their Majesties were exceedingly brilliant. That of the Emperor on the 1st (Sunday) I will not describe; but an account of the Empress's reception on Monday evening will, I am sure, possess interest for at least your fair readers. At nine o'clock their Majesties entered the throne-room, after having received the members of the Corps Diplomatique and their wives. Their Majesties were accompanied by the Princes and Princesses of the Imperial family, except Prince Jérome, who

was prevented by illness from attending. They were preceded by the Grand Officers of the Crown, by the Premier Chamberlain of the Emperor, and a Master of Ceremonies, and followed by the Grand Master and Mistress of the Empress's household, and by the ladies of honour of her Majesty. The Empress wore a magnificent *manteau de Cour*, composed of crimson velvet, studded with golden stars. Upon her head was placed the fine crown in which is set France's diamond *le Regent*. The under dress was composed of white satin, with white Brussels lace flounces. When their Majesties seated themselves upon the throne, there were upon the right of the Emperor, Prince Napoleon and the Princes Louis and Joachim Murat. To the left of the Empress were seated the Princesses Clotilde and Mathilde, and all the Princesses of the Murat family. The sight was a grand one, the hundred lights shedding a glorious lustre on the myriad-coloured dresses of the ladies and the glittering decorations of the gentlemen, whose magnificent uniforms gave additional brilliancy to the scene.

You watch eagerly the reception of the ladies who come before you, and you have a secret glow of pride when you reflect on your own *aplomb*; you will not be embarrassed, you will not make an awkward curtsey; but, alas for the fallacy of human hopes, your turn comes. Your name is proclaimed aloud, and like a guilty culprit you advance with a fluttering heart and a deep blush. You curtsey; you are conscious it is as *gauche* as that of any country girl. You pass on with an inward sense of having done nothing as well as you wished, and a firm conviction that the trouble and anxiety of going to these Imperial and Royal receptions far exceed the pleasure which is derived from satisfied pride at having "been presented."

On Tuesday evening their Majesties gave a grand dinner at the Tuileries. Among the guests were the Duke de Cambacéres, the Duke de Bassano, and Mr. Mocquard, chef du Cabinet de l'Empereur. In the evening there was a concert by some of the celebrated artistes now in Paris.

The Court balls will soon commence. Immediately after will begin those of the Ministers. So, you see, in spite of the grave political questions now being discussed, in defiance of the reiterations of those who declare Paris will be dull this winter, we shall have the customary fêtes in Imperial and Ministerial circles, while among ourselves the cry is still *Vive la gaité!*

The Parisians are proverbially a gay, light-hearted people, and on all occasions they instinctively seek out the *côté plaisant*, in many instances under circumstances that would cause a less light-hearted people to be glum, and even unhappy. A friend who has long lived in Paris, and who is well versed in *le caractère Parisien*, came, late on the evening of the 31st of December, to ask us to accompany him to the Barrières, where for years past the *octroi* officers have stopped the vehicles of rich and poor alike, to make to all the monotonous demand, "Vous n'avez rien à déclarer?" and then turned away as the driver whipped up his horses and passed on into the city. Our friend told us that at midnight precisely the *octroi* officers would leave the Barriéres, after having thrown them wide open, and were at once to retreat to the fortifications. He was sure that on the occasion much merriment would ensue, and so we all sallied forth to witness it. Our old friend was right. When we arrived at the nearest gate we found a crowd of at least four or five hundred persons, all shouting and dancing to the sound of music, and all prepared at the given moment to precede the Customs

men to their most distant stations with pans, kettles, &c. whereon to make a discordant *charivari*. As the clock of the church struck twelve, the *octroi* men fell into line, and at once began their march to the fortifications breeched. & men women, and children shouting, singing, and making most uproarious noise with their pans and kettles. But we noticed that, simultaneously with the outward rush, took place a still greater inward rush, and such laughing as we never before heard. We soon ascertained what was being done. Geese and ducks were quacking, hens cackling, and loud above all came the shrill squeak of pigs. The laughing people were for once escaping the *octroi* duty, and although safe in so doing or e time being, a guilty consciousness that they were evading the law made them rush through the gates as though they feared pursuit. Bottles containing wine, &c., were broken in the struggle, eggs smashed, and their possessors pushed and hauled about, but all amid shouts and laughter that was contagious to a degree you can scarcely imagine. Crowds of soldiers were waiting inside the barriers to partake of the good things as they were brought in, and many of them had lighted fires, and were soon busy in preparing a general feast. When we left the fun was still uproarious, and but few of the fowls that had escaped the *octroi* were alive to tell the tale. The wine was in a fair way to totally disappear, while the people were getting more and more happy. No doubt they will long bear in mind the removal of the *octroi* posts.

In theatricals we have nothing new, with the exception of a new opera at the Italiens, *Margherita la Mendicante*, which, with Borghi-Mamo and Gardoni, is attractive. The music is smooth and pretty, and shews talent, but must be heard again —in fact, two or three times—to be conscientiously reviewed.

The *Duc Job* still fills the Français to overflowing after forty nights's representation. The fine *comédien* Got has a part in this piece exactly suited to his powers, and contrives to make the old story "loving a young lady and fearing that he is not beloved in return" as fresh and charming as though it were something quite new. "One touch of nature makes the whole world kin," and when *le Duc Job* learns the death of his friend his outburst of overpowering grief finds a response in every heart. A new drama at the Ambigu Comique, written by the prolific Dennery (who must really have invented some machine for making plays—a single revolution of the wheel, and they come out sixty at a time), is called *Le Marchand de Coco.* Your readers may perhaps not know exactly what a *Marchand de Coco* is, but those who are close observers must have remarked when they were in Paris, men who carried on their backs an oblong tin box, from whence issued at the will of the *marchand* a disagreeable yellow-looking liquid, which was sold at the moderate price of one sou the glass to all thirsty urchins, soldiers, *ouvriers*, &c. This, then, is the *marchand de Coco*, who, if we are to believe M. Dennery, is a being who possesses all those noble and rare virtues which should be (but unfortunately are not) inculcated in every mind. The coco merchant rescues females in distress, brings together lovers and sweethearts, parents and children, and starves himself to give to a young lady of noble birth—who, during the troublous times of the revolution, has thrown herself on his protection—the proceeds of his trade. Frederick Lemaitre, although age is fast creeping upon him, is still the Frederick Lemaitre of former days, and gives to the fine but rather flowery sentiments of the author *au naturel* which goes straight to the heart of the Boulevards audience.

A most interesting sale took place a few days ago at the

hotel of Mme. Biennais, who, it may be remembered, died suddenly, and on the same day as her son-in-law, M. Berger, Préfet de la Seine. This lady, whose husband was jeweller to Louis XVI. and Napoleon I., had a collection of artistic objects, jewels, &c., possessing rare value in the eyes of all who admire historical *souvenirs*. The Emperor, who is impressed with great respect and admiration for Marie Antoinette, caused to be purchased four *flacons* and a *présentoir*, cut in crystal in the Louis XVI. style, which were formerly the property of the martyr Queen. The price paid was 6,200f. The remainder of this service, of which Her Majesty chose the handsomest articles, is composed of eighteen pieces, all in cut crystal, and has been sold for 4,000f. The stoppers and mountings are gold, curiously carved and sculptured. Prince Napoleon became the possessor of a fine sword which had been used by the First Emperor. The guard and sheath are of massive gold—the price 3,250f. A silver soup bowl was sold for 3,270f. Two fine bronze vases, in the purest style of the First Empire, fetched 2,850f. Nothing but the death of Mme. Biennais could have given to the world these objects, whose artistic value is augmented by the reminiscences attached to them.

A highly salutary measure has just been taken in Lyons, which has for its object the keeping in check of that refractory body, the public coachmen. These people, fully conscious that, sooner than seek the redress that can be had, though with trouble and annoyance, the "fare" will submit to any insolence, by the following simple means are made to understand that politeness must be observed. In one of the pockets in the inside of the fly or cab are placed a number of letters, of which the following is the model :—

"Lyon, le 186 .

M.

demeurant

a pris la voiture No. sur la station de la place

186 heure

Il porte la plainte suivante ....

....

Monsieur Blanc,

Inspecteur-général de la voirie,

Rue de la Bourse, 51.

Lyon.

(Plier cette lettre, la jeter à la poste sans affranchir.)

In Fashions we have nothing strikingly novel, although the dresses sent out by our first *conturières* are perhaps more quietly elegant than those of last year. Green, brown, violet, and black are the fashionable colours for walking dresses. Blue is almost totally eschewed, but this is perhaps owing to its not being a becoming colour to the *Parisiennes.* I saw a most beautiful dress the other day at Vignon's (the Empress's dressmaker), composed of black velvet, but entirely covered with the most elaborate embroidery of black silk, with a few jet beads intermingled to give effect. It was made for the Countess de M., and has been three month in the *ouvrière's* hands. A new colour for evening dress is the mauve pink, a mixture of the two colours, which is delicate and very becoming. Embroidery is very much in vogue this year; it is extremely handsome, but the expense of making is sometimes greater than the material itself. A *groseille moire antique* was embroidered down the front of the skirt, on the corsage, and on the sleeves, with a handsome pattern of grapes and leaves. The silk used is very thick and strong, and on delicate coloured dresses must be a shade darker to give effect.

Gold braid is being extensively introduced into all articles of ladies' dress. It has invaded even the bonnets. I saw the wife of one of the foreign Ambassadors the other day with a bonnet composed of rich dark green velvet. The inside trimming was a *rouleau* of gold braid, intertwined with green velvet. Gold acorns are plentifully sprinkled on the outside of the bonnet, which I can assure your readers gave a most regal appearance to the wearer. The *Tulle bouillonné* dresses will still be *la grande mode* for balls this winter. Velvet trimmings, which have been in great favour, will be abandoned for the more light and graceful flowers this year Satins will be more fashionable than silks for *demi-toilette*, but the efforts to replace the fine moire antiques by watered silks has failed entirely.

And now, before terminating my epistle, allow me to conduct you into the artistic world. You are no doubt aware that the confines between art and artistic trade are but narrow, so do not wonder if I at times get somewhat away from the first. I have lately visited some rare and valuable collections of miniatures which the public will have the opportunity of purchasing in a few weeks. A friend of ours (you know we are always dependent upon friends) prevailed upon M. Charles Pillet to allow us to peep at the collection in question. Our friend informed us, with due emphasis upon the important fact, that Monseur Pillet was a celebrated *commissaire priseur*. What that is I scarcely know, but I impart the information for your benefit. I am told he is a great friend of *les amateurs Anglais*. Among the collection of miniatures I particularly noticed one, painted by the celebrated Augustin, of the beautiful wife of the late Sir Robert Peel. I can scarcely style it a painting. It is a *bijou*, and one can but admire the skill with which the artist

has rendered the features of our beautiful countrywoman. I also observed two other miniatures of fair *blonde* English women, that seemed *dépaysées* in Paris. They should be in London, a city where the like fair faces and curls may be found. I felt proud of my countrywomen while gazing upon their *chef d'œuvres*. Both of these were also by Augustin, who, dying some twenty years ago, has left such admirable works as make us regret the more the loss of his skilful pencil.

Three miniatures by Mme. de Mirbel, three by Hall, and a portrait of Mme. de Maintenon by Petitot, also form a part of this rare collection. The latter portrait is framed in the centre of an oil painting by Lesueur, the subject of which is grave and almost philosophical. It is Time making Old Age pass before Youth—a delicate compliment by the artist to Mme. de Maintenon, who was aged when the miniature was taken. Lastly, I noticed a portrait of Molière, when he was quite young, by Rigault; and an oil painting, which may be called a page from the history of the seventeenth century. It represents a feast in the apartments of the Duke of Orleans (Regent), at which the Duchess of Berri and the Duchess of Maine are present.

In my next letter I shall give you some details of the magnificent collection paintings owned by Lord Henry Seymour deceased, a short time since. The horses he possessed at the me of his demise, were sold a few days since. I can only assure you that my gentlemen friends said they were most splendid animals. In a few days the legatees of the noble lord will sell his furniture and the contents of his famous wine cellar. Ah! that cellar! In another letter I shall perhaps take you down into that famous cave, and give you details that will cause some of your readers to smack

their lips. These wines are sold for the benefit of the poor of Paris and of London. If I call the attention of your connoisseur readers to this sale, and they accordingly purchase, why, I shall have worked for the poor! So I announce to you some wine talk for my next.

LETTER XXXV.

New Year's Festivities—The Review of the Imperial Guard—The Prince Imperial on his Pony—Madame Brohan's New Comedietta—The Grand Court Ball—The Empress's Toilette—The Princess Clotilde—An English Rifleman.

Paris, Thursday, January 12, 1860.

In political circles one of the chief subjects of conversation is the change of Ministers. By some persons the removal of M. Walewski is regarded with disfavour, while, of course M. de Thouvenel's adherents predict every possible good from the moment of his taking possession of the *portefeuille* of Foreign Affairs. I am almost ashamed to acknowledge that my first thought upon reading the announcement of the change in *The Morning Chronicle*, was, "how sorry Count and Countess Walewski must be to give up that magnificent mansion, upon whose parqueted and deliciously smooth floors so many happy feet were dancing at their grand *bal masqué* last year." The Empress must have had the same idea on this matter, for her Majesty has placed at the disposal of Count Walewski the now unoccupied house of the Duke and Duchess d'Albe, in the Champs Elysées. The gracious offer was declined. The Count and Countess are about to reside in an apartment in the Faubourg St. Honoré. In a few

weeks another *bal masqué* will be given at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but the smiling and fair-haired Countess, who so graciously received all who entered those noble halls, will no longer be there. The Countess was particularly gracious to our compatriots.

The New Year's festivities are pretty well over now, although presents are given and cards sent during the entire month. All *objets d'art*, jewellery, and even *bonbons*, have increased so dreadfully in price during the past few years, that the great desire now is to present not only something for which a great price has been paid, but something *recherché* —quite unusual. I have heard of several of these latter being given. One lady, well known in Paris as daughter of an English earl and wife of a French duke, had received a box of *bonbons en papillotes*. The box being a handsome one, and coming from one of the lady's most intimate friends, caused some surprise when found to contain *bonbons* wrapped in paper, which style is quite out of fashion now. The surprise was changed to pleasure when it was found that in every *papillote* was the autograph of some celebrated person. Shakespeare, Byron, and Milton, reminded the lady of her native poets; Racine, Voltaire, and Molière recalled those of the land of her adoption. It was a most beautiful present, and most gracefully conceived.

A grand military spectacle was afforded us on Tuesday. At one o'clock the Emperor, in honour of the Prince of Orange, passed the Imperial Guard in review. As early as eleven o'clock a mass of people of all ages, sexes, and conditions, had congregated near the Place du Carrousel. They were not exactly aware of what was to take place, but they knew that some ceremony was to be performed, owing to the numbers of sergents de ville that surrounded the Palace, while

large numbers of mounted gendarmes kept the streets clear, and prevented the crowd from pressing too near to the entrance of the Tuileries court-yard. Soon the quick lively music of the Chasseurs de Vincennes was heard, and then the sturdy, active little fellows, came marching into the Place du Carrousel. All of them wore the Italian *medal*, while many, very many of them had the cross of the *Legion* of Honour and the Victoria medal. They had bravely shivered in the cold dreary Crimea, and bravely panted under the burning rays of an Italian sun. I gazed with heartfelt admiration at these heroes, when, the noise of approaching music and a murmur of approbation on the part of the crowd causing me to look back, I perceived the white turbans of the dare-devil Zouaves. On they came with a swagger peculiarly their own, and noticeable in no other troops. What decorations! What scars, and what large beards, and ugly terrible-looking little men! The tambour-major was twisting and turning his cane, the drums were beating quickly, while the shrill trumpets kept time with the elastic step of the soldiers. All this I felt rather than saw, for my attention was fixed on a pale, handsome young officer, whose left arm was gone, whose cheek was gashed with a deep, oh! so deep a scar, that had for ever closed an eye, whose breast was covered with decorations, and who was marching quickly and bravely along as though he were Mars himself, and not a frail mortal like any of us. No wonder the men are brave when they have such officers. I should have stated above that the Chasseurs de Vincennes had their *drapeau* decorated, and that when the tattered and glorious standard appeared, the crowd cheered in the most enthusiastic manner. The regiment of Chasseurs I refer to now is the one that so gallantly stormed and took some Austrian batteries at Solferino. After the Zouaves

came the tall, strong-looking Grenadiers, and then the Voltigeurs.

At one o'clock precisely the *tambours battant aux champs* announced the presence of the Emperor. His Majesty was accompanied by the Prince of Orange, and a splendid and most brilliant *cortège* of general officers. Marshals Randon, Regnault de Saint Jean d'Angely, and Magnan were among the *cortège*, as were General Fleury and the *officiers d'ordonnance* of the Emperor on service. While the Emperor was slowly riding along the front line of bronzed heroes, a scene of a more amusing character was taking place in the court-yard of the Tuileries. His Imperial Highness the little Prince, mounted, much to his evident delight, upon a real pony, was making a more familiar visit to the soldiers of the Grenadier regiment in which his Highness is a corporal. M. Bachon, the *écuyer* of the Prince, walked by his side and held him on his saddle. The little fellow was rigged out in all the glory of full uniform, with the *galon* on his arm; and it was a most amusing thing to witness his demure look as he passed along the ranks. The little soldier cap gave him a smart, sharp look, while his bright blue eyes were dancing with a glee that was at variance with the dignified pinched-up air of his little mouth. When the youthful Grenadier had completed his round he returned to the Palace, where the Empress, with her ladies of honour, was waiting to receive him. He pranced about, having descended from his pony, until the Emperor, the Prince of Orange, and the brilliant escort came in front of the Pavillon de l'Horloge to witness the defile of the troops: whereupon the young Imperial scion remounted his well-trained pony and took his stand at the left hand of his father. As the troops passed before their Majesties they shouted "Vive l'Empéreur!" "Vive l'Im-

pératrice!" "Vive le Prince Impérial!" while the crowd outside, catching up the cry, made the square ring with most loyal and evidently heartfelt acclamations. The Parisians are proud of their soldiers, and they feel redoubled admiration for the Sovereign that leads them on from victory to victory, I heard an old lady near me exclaim, with the accent of truth and deep feeling, as the Emperor passed near us, "C'est lui qui devrait porter la plus grande et la plus belle médaille d'Italie."

By two o'clock the *défilé* was over, and the Emperor, the Prince of Orange, and the brilliant staff had gone to lunch I suppose, while the distant roll of the drum indicated that the soldiers were going to their barracks. In a short time the crowd slowly dispersed, and the whole affair was ended. The Parisians had had an additional spectacle, and they, also, were willing to retire.

The Empress has presented to General Dieu, who was so severely wounded at Solferino, a most ingenious mechanical couch. The General's wounds prevent his rising as yet, and the couch in question is so arranged as to allow the brave soldier to recline in any position he pleases, by working the machinery of the couch. Her Majesty enhanced the value of the considerate gift by making known to the general that she fully appreciated the services he had rendered to France, and by expressing the most ardent hopes for his speedy recovery. It is a most commendable trait in the character of Eugénie of France that she is ever ready to sympathise with the afflicted.

At the Italiens, *Margherita la Mendicante* has proved a great success. The *libretto* is scanty, but the music is most melodious. Gardoni's sweet tones linger in one's ears after the opera, for the music is very well suited to his voice.

Mme. Borghi-Mamo, albeit not one of the favourites of your correspondent, shows to advantage in M. Braga's new opera. We are looking forward to some of the old favourites at the Italiens. Flotow's opera of *Marta*, which has been in rehearsal for a month, will no doubt soon be given. At the Français we are having the old standard comedies on the off nights of *Le Duc Job*. A little comedietta, in one act, written by the *spirituelle* Augustine Brohan, called *Qui femme a, guerre a*, has been received with extraordinary favour. The plot, which is a very slight one, does not even possess novelty of idea. The characters are a married couple, who, while really loving mutually, manage to be dreadfully *ennuyés* in each other's society. The lady complains that the gentleman no longer shows that devotion, that *empressement*, that delightful embarrassment in her presence, which was visible before their marriage. He no longer praises her hair, her eyes, her figure—in fact, he is getting fat, and no longer loves her. The unoffending husband pleads in defence that if he is growing fat, it is because he has contentment of mind. Does he not possess the object of his affection; why should he praise her beauty? If he found anything which did not please him he would complain; he never complained, so he was always pleased. The lady, however, pays little attention to these excuses, and is only brought to her senses on finding a *billet doux* in a female hand addressed to her husband, lying on the floor, where he had accidentally dropped it. Her jealousy and fears aroused seriously, she flies to ask pardon for her complaints, and finds to her intense delight that the letter was a *ruse* of the loving husband. This slight sketch can give you but little idea of the keen and sparkling wit of the dialogue, the brilliancy of the repartee, and the delicate pathos of the repentant wife.

The first grand court ball of the season took place last

night at the Tuileries. As early as half-past nine o'clock the immense *salles* were crowded with the rank, wit, and beauty now congregated in the capital. The great object to the occasional visitor to those balls is to make his way into *la Salle des Maréchaux*, in which gorgeously decorated room the Imperial quadrille is danced. This object last night seemed to us, coming about half-past nine, to be almost impossible to attain. A dense crowd was assembled in the long room, the first into which you enter, and to make your way through so many officers, magistrates, judges, and ladies, wives and daughters of all these, seemed perfectly impracticable. I, however, was extremely anxious to witness the Imperial quadrille; and as *ce que femme veut Dieu le veut*, after much pushing and struggling, I managed to get into the *Salle des Maréchaux*. We were amply repaid for our trouble, for never have I seen the Empress looking so lovely, nor the Emperor himself so gay and smiling. I had no time then to observe her Majesty's toilet, for the first strains of the quadrille had begun, and the Prince of Orange had approached her, and was leading her to her place. The Emperor made *vis-à-vis* with the Princess Clotilde, while the Prince Napoleon danced with his sister the Princess Mathilde. It was a double quadrille, and I remarked that Marshal Magnan and the Princess d'Essling were in it. My whole attention was given to the Imperial couple, and I therefore took little note of the persons of less importance. This was the first time I had seen the young Prince of Orange, for driving rapidly by on horseback or in a carriage can hardly be called seeing. He is a slender, interesting-looking young man, though not strikingly handsome. I think I should have recognised him as a Dutchman, even had I not known it. He moved gracefully through the quadrille—no easy matter

when you have the zephyr-like Eugénie by your side to make you look awkward and stiff. The quadrille finished, the Imperial dancers returned to their seats, to the intense gratification of the persons in the other rooms, who were waiting this signal to begin their own dancing. The excellent band began playing a delicious waltz, which set many more couples dancing than could find room. These last were suddenly stopped by an important person in a red coat, who, with an imperious wave of the hand and a grand frown, gave token that their Majesties were approaching. How beautiful the Empress looked as she advanced smiling and bowing to all the guests—now giving her tiny hand to some friend, and now stopping to speak to some more favoured being. A gorgeous scene, it was, just at that moment. The skilful arrangement of the mirrors in the apartment, which reflected a hundred-fold the persons and objects contained therein; the brilliant lights which made the diamonds of the ladies sparkle and glow like very fire upon the snowy bosoms of the fair wearers; the many and various uniforms; and, last of all, the exquisite court costume worn by the French gentlemen, made one of the grandest *coups-d'œil* that can possibly be imagined.

Now I had ample time to observe the Empress's toilette. A description of it will not, I am sure, give any idea of the brilliant simplicity (if I may use the term) of her dress. Over a slip of white silk was placed a skirt of white *tulle bouillonné*. Around the bottom of this were gracefully arranged some green and dead leaves, "all glittering with silver sheen," as if the frost had touched them. Over this was thrown a long skirt of *tulle*. The idea of the frost was also carried out here, for, as the delicate material fell in graceful folds, the lights brought out the silver drops upon the dress. Her

Majesty wore upon her head a magnificent diadem, and comb of diamonds and emeralds, necklace and bracelets to match. I may observe, *par parenthèse*, and for the especial benefit of your lady readers, that I have never seen her Majesty with a larger crinoline; in fact, all the ladies, far from abandoning that much-abused appendage to a lady's costume, seem to glory in an even more extensive *amplure* than last year.

Their Majesties passed on; the Emperor was looking very well, but, I regret to say, dreadfully bored. Dancing now commenced in earnest, and was kept np, with little intermission, until past two o'clock. Before she retired, I saw the Princess Clotilde. Her Imperial Highness looked very well, and her light blue dress with gold stars showed off to advantage the delicate transparency of her complexion; but, beyond this, I see little to admire in the daughter of King Victor Emmanuel. She is excessively *petite*, has small inexpressive eyes, and the lower portion of her face is much too large for the upper. Added to this, a constant frown gives her an air of discontent, far from agreeable, and which is rendered more *prononcé* by the smiling look of the Empress.

In justice to our countrywomen, and to soothe those who may have considered themselves affronted by remarks in a former letter, I will say that among the finest *toilettes* present were some worn by English ladies; and when they are well dressed how beautiful our English girls look! I saw many red coats of a very familiar cut executing the *deux temps* with great perfection. One very tall man passed and repassed the bench upon which I was sitting. He looked very melancholy, and did not participate in the dancing. It was a uniform, certainly, he was wearing; but

black, entirely black, without any relieving colour! The tight jacket and trousers, with no gold bands—what could it be? During a polka, I got as near the object of my wonder as possible, and then I saw upon his accoutrements the letters—V. R. He was an English rifleman, but what a very melancholy uniform. The rifle uniform relieved with a little red is very *distingué*, but the one to which I refer was quite unlike anything I had seen before.

I should have spoken in the beginning of this *compte rendu* of the magnificent aspect of the grand staircase that leads to the ball-room. On each step were standing two Cent Gardes, with their long glittering swords drawn; and the weapons, as well as the dazzingly bright cuirasses and helmets of this unique body guard, reflected in flashes the bright rays of myriads of lamps and lustres. Really a ball at the Tuileries is a most magnificent scene.

The Emperor retired much earlier than did the Empress, I have just ascertained that his Majesty has gone to St. Germain for a day's shooting, and thus I can account for his leaving the gay and festive scene at a comparatively early hour.

I had intended to speak to you of other matters this week, but as my letter is now too long, I shall defer them until my next.

LETTER XXXVI.

Fashionable Movements—The Princess Metternich: her War against Crinoline—The Princess Mathilde's First Soirée—New Toilettes—The Empress Eugénie's "Bal Intime"—Musical and Theatrical Gossip—M. Mocquard's New Piece.

Paris, Thursday, January 19, 1860.

GREAT activity now reigns in our fashionable circles. The Princess Metternich throws open her *salons* every Saturday, and the fashion and rank of all nations now in Paris may there be found assembled. I may here observe, for the benefit of your lady readers, that the Princess seems determined to bring in the fashions of the first Empire, as she appears without crinoline and with very short-waisted and tight-sleeved dresses; but I feel quite certain that this mode will not meet with general favour, for it requires the beauty and grace of a Josephine and a Marie Louise to make the *disgracieuses* modes of their time at all pleasing. The Princess is not alone in her endeavour to revive this fashion; the Marquise Aguado, a Spanish lady of great wealth, has also adopted it; but the Empress still clings to the crinoline, and I think, without her Imperial consent, the efforts of the lesser luminaries will prove futile. Last Monday evening the fine hotel of the Princess Mathilde, in the Rue de Courcelles, was beautifully lighted, and numberless carriages entered the large *cour d'honneur*, and deposited their precious burthens of crinoline and lace at the principle entrance of this princely residence. It was her Highness's first *soirée*, and it was a grand one. The whole of the diplomatic corps was represented, and the presence of younger members of the principal

families of distinction gave to the scene great animation. The dancing did not cease until after two o'clock in the morning. I observed some very handsome toilettes at this ball; the Princess Metternich and Mme. Aguado were dressed in the peculiar fashion of the first Empire, of which I have already spoken, but the the Duchesse de M——, the wife of the celebrated diplomatist, was attired in a most simple but beautiful manner—an under slip of white satin, over thisa skirt of *tulle bouillonné*, the *bouillons* being cherry and white alternately. Again, a skirt of *tulle*, entirely white, and not *bouillonné*, looped up on one side with a large brooch of rubies and diamonds, a tiara of rubies and diamonds with necklace and bracelets to match. Another pretty dress was composed of *tulle* (this material is almost *de rigueur* now for balls), the upper half white, and the lower half red. Over the white portion was placed a Brussels lace flounce, black, while over the red part was thrown another flounce of Brussels lace, but white. The black flounce wes surmounted by a *ruche* of red *tulle*, and the white flounce by a *ruche* of white *tulle*, but placed on the red portion of the skirt. A wreath of red and white roses crowned the head of the fair wearer, and completed this exquisite toilette. By those who possess that excellent *fond de garde robe* lace flounces, this dress may easily be arranged. Even if both flounces were black the effect would still be very fine. The most charming, because the most select, *soirées* of the winter are the *bals intimes* of the Empress. Her Majesty gave one this week. There were but 250 persons present. Besides Prince Metternich no other diplomatist was honoured with an invitation. Perhaps her Majesty thought these gentlemen too full of political cares to join in the mirth and jollity of her *petit bal*. The Emperor only remained half an hour in the rooms, but the Empress, who seemed to enjoy

the fun as well as her guests, stayed till the last of these had departed. Her Majesty's dress was of white *tulle,* looped up with a garland of roses and grapes; *coiffure* of roses and grapes intermingled with diamonds. The Empress, who in the Court balls only dances once, and that a quadrille; in her *petits bals* certainly lets few of the fancy dances pass by without joining in. Those who have seen the beautiful Eugénie but in "the pomp of pageantry, the pride of power," when custom forces a staid and dignified demeanour, can have little idea of how heartily she participates in the *verve* and *laisser aller* which characterise our neighbours.

At the Italiens we have had the *reprise* of Bellini's beautiful opera *La Sonnambula,* if not the most important, at least the sweetest and most carefully-written work of the Neapolitan maestro. It was written and produced at Milan in 1830; Madame Pasta, Rubini, and Mariani took the principal *rôles.* The *libretto* was by Felice Romani, and was taken from a *ballet* composed by Scribe for the Grand Opéra at Paris. The opera was brought out at the Italiens in the year 1831, and met with great success, Madame Pasta, Rubini, and Santini performed the principal parts. It was the *rôle* of *Elvino* that made the fame of Rubini in Paris. The part of *Amina* is a favourite one with *cantatrices.* In 1832 Mme. Tadolini, an excellent singer, took the part at the Italiens; in 1835, the well-known Mme. Persiani; in 1850, Sontag; in 1852, Cruvelli. The young *artiste* now entrusted with this important *rôle* is a French woman, a pupil of Duprez, who has never before appeared on the stage. A brilliant career in her profession lies before Mlle. Marie Battu. Possessing a pleasing appearance, a sweet and at the same time powerful voice, together with the high degree of cultivation which Duprez always gives his pupils, she is destined

before long to take her place amongst the most celebrated of the musical celebrities. Gardoni was the *Elvino*, and astonished even his greatest admirers with the power, strength, and force with which he sang. The Mario worshippers are constantly complaining of a want of fire in Gardoni. They must complain of something; and, as his voice is perfectly faultless, they speak of inanimate acting. But it is impossible for them to complain of a lack of fire in his rendering of *Elvino*. In the magnificent air where he accuses and repulses the innocent *Amina*, his whole action, singing, and expression were admirable. Angelini as the *Count* was, as usual, perfectly satisfactory. *Margherita la Mendicanté* has not been so successful as the management hoped; the music is good, but no higher term of approbation can be applied to it. Gardoni and Mme. Borghi-Mamo contrived to get themselves applauded, but they could not succeed in making the opera a "hit." Doubtless M. Braga will improve on this, which is a very creditable beginning for a young composer. At the other theatres there is nothing of importance to mention. The Opéra Comique is still giving *Le Pardon de Ploërmel*, but the withdrawal of Faure as *Hoël* gives the idea that something new will shortly be produced. Those skilled in the mysteries of the different theatres say that *Don Juan* by Mozart, is now in rehearsal at the Opéra Comique, with Faure as the libertine. This would be a great treat, after the quantity of operatic nothings we have been seeing at the Salle Favart. At the Lyrique one of last winter's favourite operas, *La Reine Topaze*, has been reproduced, with Madame Miolan Carvalho as the heroine. The house has been crowded, although the opera is a most absurd one, both in plot and in musical composition, introducing the "Carnaval de Venise," and other thread-bare airs much too frequently. Alexandre Dumas'

play, *Le Père Prodigue*, is still drawing great crowds to the Gymnase. The Prince of Orange honoured by his presence a horrid, dirty, little, low Boulevard theatre, called the Folies Dramatiques, to witness the review, *Vive la Joie et les Pommes de Terre*. You can inagine from the title what the piece must be, and will therefore not be severe with me when I say I have not seen it. In that most interesting and instructive work, called "The Travels of Brown, Jones, and Robinson," friends of the staid Mr. Punch, I remember a picture of Jones, as he appeared at the Opera at home, and Jones as he appeared at the Opera abroad. What a contrast between the Jones well *coiffé*, irreproachably gloved and booted, who sits by the side of his lady mother, a beautiful picture of the English gentleman—and the Jones of the Continent, who, with his feet up on the bench before him, his uncombed hair straggling over his forehead, indulges in a prolonged yawn occasioned by the loss of sleep in the railway-carriage the night before. You will perhaps think this rather irrelevant; but I was going to say that I am struck with the difference in the comportment of the young scions of royal and imperial houses at home and in Paris. At home they are like Jones, in a higher degree; in Paris they visit theatres into which an honest *bourgeois* would scarcely enter—in fact, they take advantage of the French *laisser aller* to see all the amusements of the lower classes of the capital. I suppose the attraction is "variety," which, as our great bard tell us, is "the spice of life."

The Vaudeville, a theatre that for several years has been noted for the looseness and immorality of the plays represented on its boards, has just produced one which, in point of shameful and disgusting incidents, far exceeds *La Dame aux Camélias*, *Dalila*, *Les Filles de Marbre*, and others of the class. *La*

Pénélope Normande is a disgrace to the theatre, to the actors, to the public, and its production at the Vaudeville shows that "La Censure," that body to which all plays must be submitted in Paris, is not particular as to morality so long as political events are not touched upon. But with the public lies the blame. This style of drama, though universally censured, draws better than any other, and the management, of course, panders to the public taste.

The sale of Lord Henry Seymour's wines commenced the day before yesterday and continued yesterday and to-day. The attendance was very large, and the prices given exceedingly good. The sale finishes to-day. The amateurs of curiosities, objects of art, and of pictures, seem never to be tired of the frequent sales of these articles which take place at the Hotel de Ventes in the Rue Drouat. Go when you will, you always find the same persons seeking all things to which may be attached a historical souvenir, or which are due to the talent of some great artist. I spoke in a former letter of a collection of miniatures and oil-paintings which were to be sold by M. Pillet, the *commissaire primeseur*. This sale took place the day before yesterday in presence of a large number of amateurs. A charming miniature by Augustin, the portrait of the celebrated *cantatrice* Henriette Sontag, Comtess de Rossi, as she appeared in the *rôle* of *Donna Anna* in *Don Juan*, was sold for 845f.; and the portrait of the beautiful wife of Sir Robert Peel, also by Augustin, fetched 300f. A portrait of the Baronne de Mouchy, by Dumont, 305f. The family of Hall, painted by himself, a *chef d'œuvre* well-known in the artistic world, brought the good price of 2,260f. The portrait of the daughter of the Duc de Coigny, known as *la pauvre fille*, painted by Hall, was sold for 420f. This interesting picture, to the original of which are attached

some of the most melancholy *souvenirs* of the French revolution, excited great admiration among the amateurs. The daughter of the Duc de Coigny, whose memory will live as long as the French language is spoken, on account of the beautiful lines composed on her by André Chenier, was a most beautiful and accomplished young lady. On one side of this miniature was written, *La veille du dernier jour*; *oh, mon Dieu!* On the other side—*Résignation angélique, Conciergerie,* 1793. *Priez pour elle.* What sad thoughts, what dark forebodings, what joys for ever blasted are expressed by these few words, whose simplicity is more touching than would be a flood of passionate grief. It was to her that André Chenier dedicated his sublime ode, "La Jeune Captive." He was enduring imprisonment at that time and in the same prison as the noble and beautiful Mdlle. de Coigny, and it was in a dark and noisome cell of St. Lazare that the touching verses were written.

I have been to see the new play by Messieurs Mocquard and Dennery, *L'Histoire d'un Drapeau*, at the Théâtre Impérial du Cirque. The plot is one of the most simple character. A battalion of the Parisian volunteers goes to join the Army of Italy, commanded by General Bonaparte. Before leaving Paris these brave men buy a flag, which on the field of battle will remind them of the faubourgs of the great city where they passed their childhood. Arrived in Italy, they obtain the right to preserve the flag, and are soon in presence of the enemy. Courage is of little avail when experience is with it; our Parisian volunteers fly before the enemy; General Bonaparte presents himself before them, and pronounces them unworthy to bear the colours of France. These words wound the pride of the brave soldiers—two or three leave the ranks, and swear to redeem their honour and

preserve their flag. In the next act we see the expedition to Egypt. Our volunteers have conducted themselves gloriously at the battle of the Pyramids, and their flag enters the town of Cairo saluted by the whole army. Here several years pass. The Empire has been proclaimed; the flag has been surmounted by an eagle; but, at an engagement outside the walls of Vienna, the officer who bore it has been killed; the soldiers are not able to defend it, and the glorious standard is in the hands of the Austrians. The Parisians swear to redeem it, and by aid of disguises penetrate into a fort where the flag is hid, seize it, and when the Imperial army enters Vienna, the volunteers have the glory of presenting to the Emperor the eagle-crowned *drapeau!* After the campaign of Germany comes that of Russia. The Parisians bear up against the killing frost of the Russian winter; make a triumphal entry into Smolensk; see Moscow burned before their eyes; and return to France with their flag. But the times are changed; the tricolour dare no longer float to the breeze; it must be hidden. The Emperor is at Elba. The soldiers are now under the Restoration, and the white flag is offered to them. The officers refuse, and to the words of one of Louis XVIII's préfets reply by shouting "Vive l'Empereur." The cry is soon to be a loyal one, for the Emperor returns from the island of Elba, and the first soldiers who salute him are the volunteers of Paris, and the first tricolour that he sees is their flag.

This is the end of the drama; but before the curtain falls the scene at the back changes, and one sees the taking of the heights of Solferino by the army of Napoleon III. The flag of the first Empire has been avenged; it again appears on the battle-field, glorious and triumphant as when floating over the Pyramids and at Moskowa. Join to these

military facts a few amusing incidents, which give interest to the drama, and you will have an idea of the piece, which really does honour to M. Dennery and to his erudite *collaborateur*. The people, enthusiastic always at any mention of the name of their great General and Emperor, could scarcely contain themselves during the patriotic speeches of the actors; and when in an eloquent speech the *hero of the* piece throws down the white flag and shouts "Vive l'Empereur!" the cry was taken up by the whole audience, and for five minutes cries of "Vive l'Empereur!" "Vive la Famille Impériale!" rang through the large building.

These little incidents will prove to any one the real popularity of the Imperial *régime*. The word Napoleon acts like magic upon the masses, and no one can but be convinced of this when they witness the enthusiasm of the spectators of the Théâtre du Cirque. The actor who represented Napoleon I. was received with frenzied shouts of "Vive l'Empereur," and fifty times during the evening the crowd was swayed with irresistible emotion when he used words memorable as having fallen from the lips of the great General. The authors of the *Histoire d'un Drapeau*, Messieurs Mocquard and Dennery, must have felt a glow of pleasurable and patriotic pride swell in their hearts when they heard the loud, sincere, and enthusiastic shouts of the audience. "Vive l'Empereur Napoléon" must have rung in their ears long after the *salle de spectacle* was empty, for they had, with the magic of their talent, caused the outburst of a gratified national feeling.

LETTER XXXVII.

Mr. Rarey at the Cirque Napoléon: his Interpreter—Death of Grassot—Paris Theatricals: "Croquignole XXVI." at the Bouffes Parisiens—The Countess de Morny—The First Soirée at the Austrian Ambassador's—New Paris Modes—Herr Wagner's Concert—The Ball at the Tuileries—Edmond About's Duel.

Paris, Thursday, January 26, 1860.

I SHALL begin my letter with a brief account of a performance that has attracted great attention here. You will bear with me if I do not write *secundem artem*, but upon such a subject ladies cannot be expected to have the *aplomb* which seems to be the great ambition of several of my gentlemen acquaintances. I refer to Mr. Rarey, the American horse-tamer, who has so often and so successfully exhibited his capacity in that line in London. Mr. Rarey, as was announced here some days since, by large yellow, red and blue posters, stuck up all over the town, was to give three exhibitions at the Cirque Napoléon; and as all Paris has heard of his great and useful power in subduing vice in that best of man's friends, the horse, why, of course, all Paris was anxious to see the *Dompteur*, and to witness evidence of his remarkable system. Of course, your correspondent includes herself in "all Paris," and yesterday, at two o'clock, I formed a portion of the great crowd that filled the Cirque Napoléon. At a given hour Mr. Rarey appeared, made a bow to the select audience, and delivered a short speech, to the effect that he was not going to favour us with the view of any desperate struggle, but a simple evidence of his system for subduing without injury the wildest and most stubborn

horse. A rather ludicrous scene occurred at the moment. Mr. Rarey spoke in English; in fact, he said he regretted he could not speak in French, but he at the same time pointed to a gentleman near him who was to act as interpreter. At this, the person I refer to, stepped forward and began, in about the worst possible French, attempting a translation of Mr. Rarey's remarks. *Plus haut! plus haut!* was shouted out on all sides. The poor interpreter (an Englishman) raised his voice until he got very red in the face, but without any decided success. I must remark here, that if Mr. Rarey did not know as much of the language as did his interpreter, he must have less knowledge of French than any one I ever saw. Loud rose the shouts of the people that were up in the galleries. But the greater portion of the audience were most respectable, and they soon succeeded in silencing the clamour. This done, a horse was brought in. It seemed a most quiet, good-natured beast, and Mr. Rarey assured us that such was the base—that he had chosen it merely to give a preliminary idea of his system. He then buckled a strap around the horse's leg, having first doubled it up, and the poor, soft-eyed horse limped about for some time, until at last it lay down quietly, and Mr. Rarey proceeded to knock its hoofs together, and do sundry other things indicative of the poor horse's entire tameness and entire prostration. This done, the "good horse" was led out, and a tall, raw-boned, ugly-eyed animal made his appearance. I noticed that he wore a muzzle, and Mr. Rarey announced that he was a most terribly vicious animal, that he bit those who came near, and that he also treated the unwary to any quantity of kicks. All this detestable character the horse fully bore out, by backing his ears, and rolling eyes that decidedly looked too white. You see I am aware that a horse should not

show too much of the white of his eye. I must avow, however, *entre nous*, that I got the idea from my aforesaid gentlemen acquaintances. Mr. Rarey buckled up his leg, after some trouble, and then there commenced a serious tussle. The brute was most obstinate, and refused to be laid down; but, after a rather long space of time, Mr. Rarey succeeded in getting him on his side; and in a few moments the man had completely conquered the brute, thus proving most conclusively that the system is a most useful one. I confess I shuddered when Mr. Rarey laid his head between the hind hoofs of the stubborn brute, that had been so short a time before kicking most viciously; but he was evidently well aware that he could do so safely. The large vicious eyes, at first so starting forth, and even injected with blood, now looked meek and humble, and a general relaxation of the muscles was very apparent. It was man's victory, by superior skill and courage, over brute strength and doggedness. An universal feeling of sympathy with Mr. Rarey was evinced by the most uproarious cheers and clapping of hands. I noticed that the ladies present were mostly English and American. The French ladies do not ride much, and take, consequently, but little interest in horses. Mr. Rarey gives a few more exhibitions here, and I do not doubt they will all be as successful as the one we attended. Our Jockey Club was well represented yesterday, and I remarked many cavalry officers present. They seemed to take a real and serious interest in the proceedings, and applauded most heartily when at last the horse that was so vicious was conquered.

Our theatrical week has been rather a dull one, though we are rich in promises—a new opera at the Italiens; the *reprise* of the old and glorious *chef-d'œuvre* of Mozart, *Don Juan*, at the Opéra Comique; and two new operas at the

Lyrique. This shows a commendable activity on the part of the different managements. But, alas! the *Duc Job* is still drawing crowds at the Français, so we can hope for nothing new there for weeks to come. All those of your readers who have seen the affecting drama by Mme. de Girardin, entitled *La Joie fait Peur*, will remember the pretty and ladylike little actress who personates the daughter of the afflicted mother, the heroine of the play. The young lady, Mdlle. Dubois, has just come in for a legacy of 200,000f., left her by an old gentleman, who states that her exemplary conduct in private life and her excellence in her profession have induced him to make her his heiress—a very fortunate thing for an actress. The celebrated *comique* of the Palais Royal, Grassot, died in the early part of this week. Many of your readers will remember having often laughed most heartily at the droll seriousness of this comedian. He lost his voice some twelve or fourteen months ago, and has not acted since.

The Bouffes Parisiens, that pretty little theatre, once frequented by the best classes of music-loving Paris, but now degenerated into a resort for the low and vulgar, has seen, during the past week, audiences which must remind the management of its former days. *Croquignole XXVI.* is the title of a comic opera, in one act, the *libretto* of which is by M. Lepine, private secretary of the Count de Morny. The gentleman's position in society is far higher than his dramatic power, if one can judge by *Croquignole XXVI.*, a tissue of absurdities which does not even possess the advantage of being ludicrous. The Count and Countess de Morny witnessed the piece last night. The young and, to me, beautiful (although not considered so in Paris) Countess de Morny is looking thinner and paler than when I last saw

her. The deep mourning she wears for her father, combined with a paleness occasioned by a severe illness which followed the birth of her last child, has given this amiable Russian princess a delicate look. Her style of beauty is uncommon. The large, sparkling black eye might belong to any Spanish senora, while no Scottish maiden ever twined her snood over more glossy golden locks than those of the Countess de Morny. Her mourning prevents her from going into the *monde* this winter.

On Sunday last the Empress entertained a select circle of friends at dinner; in the evening the company, which then numbered about 150 persons, listened to the charming voices of some of the most celebrated *artistes* now in the capital. Among the guests I observed many of our English nobility—the Marquis of M——, also Lady Frances B—e. This lady intends to pass the winter in Paris, I understand. The first *soirée* given this winter in the diplomatic circle took place at the hotel of the Austrian Ambassador, in the Quartier St. Germain. Although the Emperor and Empress did not honour the Prince and Princess Metternich by their presence, yet the ball was a most brilliant one, attended, as it was, by all the *élite* of Paris. As the hotel of the English Ambassador is now entirely finished, all eyes were turned towards Lord Cowley in hopes of his Excellency's following the example of the Austrian Ambassador, and giving a fine ball; but the recent domestic affliction, in the death of the Dowager Lady Cowley, will of course prevent this. An English journal announced the arrival in England of Prince Napoleon. This is incorrect—the Prince is in Paris.

A fire, which threatened at one time to be attended with serious results, took place last night in that portion of the

Palais Royal occupied by the servants of the Prince Napoleon. Two large rooms were completely devastated, in one of which was a large quantity of household linen. A detachment of 100 men of the regiment of the Gendarmerie de la Garde Impériale soon succeeded in getting the fire under. The fire was occasioned by the negligence of a servant, in leaving a lighted pipe on the floor of the room. Although the fire was not at all near the apartments of her Highness, it is said that the Princess Clotilde was quite ill from fright. It is rumoured that their Imperial Highnesses intend giving a most magnificentt *fête* before the end of this month. Prince Jérome has now quite recovered from his late dangerous illness.

The bonnets sent out just now by our principal *modistes* are very beautiful. Although a due quantity of velvet is intermingled to give a January look to these becoming objects of wearing apparel, the *fonds* are made so light and graceful as to give one the idea of being blown together instead of being systematically sewn, and cut and trimmed, as is undoubtedly the case. Gold acorns, chains, and buckles are being extensively introduced into the trimming of bonnets; of course, when I say gold, it is well understood that I allude to the metal which is made to represent gold. I saw the Princess Mathilde with a handsome bonnet yesterday, *fond* and curtain of white crape, covered entirely with white blonde lace. Across the top of the bonnet was placed a broad ribbon of black velvet, which in its turn was covered with white blonde, terminating on the left side in a rosette of velvet and blonde, from the centre of which issued a gold chain, with two gold acorns. Inside trimming: a bow of black velvet on the top of the head, with another gold chain with acorns gracefully arranged; to the

left side, and rather low down in the *tours de tête*, a small red rose—white *brides*. I recommend this bonnet for *toilette habillée*. Another pretty style is the embroidered velvet; for instance, a bonnet of *groseille*-coloured velvet, embroidered with golden buttercups, is very handsome; a rich bonnet for *négligé* is made of black velvet, embroidered with violet or dark blue silk. A pretty bonnet for a young *demoiselle* is composed, the *fond* and curtain of dark blue velvet, the front portion of white quilted silk or satin, a half wreath of dark blue velvet flowers across the head—white silk or dark blue strings *ad libitum*. The dresses cut, body and skirt, all in one piece—a sort of elongated *basque* are still in great vogue. They are very graceful, and are qualified to show off a round waist to great advantage. The attempt to bring in the tight sleeves with a small cuff has failed. It does not give enough opportunity for the display of the beautiful laces which render a dress so much more *habillée* than it would otherwise be.

Last evening a grand concert was given at the Italiens; the *salle de spectacle* was filled, but as there was a Court ball, of course the attendance was less numerous than would have otherwise been the case. I did not stay during the whole performance, as I was anxious to get to the Tuileries. The concert was given by the celebrated German composer, Richard Wagner. This new comer belongs to the *école réalistè*, and in all his compositions one remarks an undoubted originality. In Germany he has passionate admirers, and the quarrels of these with his adversaries recall the struggle which took place at the end of the last century between the Piccinists and the Glückists. M. Wagner has employed 200 *choristes*, and engaged the *salle* of the Italiens for three nights. He himself directs the orchestra and the

chœurs. The music that we heard last night was really magnificent, often imposing; but I must confess that my attention was distracted by the thoughts of the ball at the Tuileries. I am told that M. Wagner is willing even to incur loss if thereby he may become known in Paris. He feels that all great artistes require the fiat of the discriminating Parisian public; for here come all artists, one after the other, to confirm fame established elsewhere.

From the Italiens we went to the Tuileries; the four large *salles* were filled to overflowing, and never have I seen in France a more brilliant assemblage than that of last night. The Empress looked most beautiful. She wore a dress composed of pink *tulle bouillonné*, with a white *tulle*-embroidered overskirt, embroidered with gold, looped up with large pink roses; *coiffure* of pink roses and diamonds. The Princess Clotilde was not present. The dancing did not cease till about half-past two; their Majesties retired at about one o'clock.

The Grand Duchess of Baden, cousin to the Emperor, is very dangerously ill. The Empress has weekly receptions every Thursday; last week her Majesty proposed dancing. Alas! there were but four gentlemen, and all those of rather an advanced age for Terpsichorean delights; however, the Duc de Malakoff, who, in spite of his gray hairs, is fond of dancing, requested the honour of her Majesty's hand for the first polka. The Empress graciously acceded, and the other persons followed suite, many ladies dancing together *faute de cavaliers.* Later in the evening other gentlemen came, but, as a singular fact, the Duc de Malakoff still was the best and most agile dancer present.

I must relate to you the particulars of an affair that has attracted the attention of Parisian society as well as of those

belonging to the press—I mean the duel of M. Edmond About. I do not wish to inculcate a lesson—far from it; but I must assert that many of the "smart" writers of the day forget the nobler uses of their witty pens to descend to unkind personalities, making thus but a mediocre use of the gifts that nature has showered upon them. For some time past the majority of the *beaux esprits* of Paris have been exchanging sarcasms and calumnies, forgetting that it is so easy a matter to outstep the the proper boundaries, which causes too often the sword or pistol to take the place of the pen. M. Edmond About is certainly one of the most able *prestidigitateurs* of the pen, but all must agree that during the last year or so he has taken pains to *rompre en visière* with all his fellow authors. He has even abandoned the camp where he gained all his victories, and has launched his envenomed shafts at friend and foe alike. The consequence was that sharp attacks drew forth bitter rejoinders, and the able satirist has often been in danger of a serious quarrel. But the bow that is continually strung will at last break. A few days ago M. About defended the *méthode de chant* of M. Cheré against the articles of M. Vaudin, the editor of the newspaper *Orphéon*, who had attacked the *méthode* Cheré. M. About was, of course, answered by Vaudin, and then M. About, in the *feuilleton* of the *Opinion National*, asserted that he would not attempt any discussion with a person that had been condemned to prison for defamation. M. Vaudin at once sent some of his friends to demand of M. About an apology. The latter refused to apologise, and also refused to fight a duel with M. Vaudin, who had instructed his friends to challenge About in case he did not apologise. This was on Sunday last. Unfortunately on Monday M. Vaudin entered the Café Néapolitain on the Boulevard, and there he met M.

About. He breakfasted, and then, rising from his chair and going towards M. About, he inquired, "Do you recognise me? I am Vaudin." About replied by a gesture of contempt, and received at once a slap on the face. After this outrage, there was but one course left. He must fight Vaudin. Two hours after About and Vaudin were face to face, with sword in hand. Alas! though the pen is keen, the sword kills. M. About received a thrust in the shoulder, and was forced to cease the combat. We now hear that the affair is not by any means ended. A second meeting is spoken of. The author of "La Question Romaine," who is, of course, confined in his rooms, receives the *élite* of Paris society. A long line of brilliant equipages may at all hours be seen before his door. Rue Laffitte, 49, M. About will no doubt remember with pleasure a wound that has proved to him how great is the sympathy felt here for his talent. Let us hope that he will, in future, renounce personalities, and no longer degrade his gifted pen by making it the abettor of pettly dislikes or *rancunes*.

LETTER XXXVIII.

Court Mourning for the Grand Duchess Stéphanie—Suspension of Court Amusements—Private Theatricals and Concerts the Rage—Events in the Musical World—Mons. and Mdme. Cabel.

Paris, Saturday, February 4, 1860.

The death of the Grand Duchess of Baden has cast a gloom upon the Imperial household. I hardly recognised the Empress yesterday as she drove quickly past enveloped in the sombre garb of woe. The heavy dark folds are not becoming

to her, it reminds one of a lovely flower seen at night; the gloom hides the beauty which you feel is there. An irresistible wish to see the flower with the smiling sun playing upon its petals comes over you—and so with Eugénie. Her radiant face should have naught but radiant colours about it; she is too beautiful to be sad. The demise of Stéphanie de Bade will, of course, put an end to the festivities at the Court; in fact, a week before the death of her Imperial Highness the receptions, dinners, *bals intimes* had ceased. The *fête* which should have taken place on Monday at the residence of Prince Napoleon in the Avenue Montaigne, in celebration of the first anniversary of his marriage, was postponed. A grand ball, which was to have taken place at the Hôtel de Ville has been *remis* to the 7th of this month. In fact, for all persons fond of gaiety and having the *entrée* at Court, this death will cause regret; to those intimately related to the amiable adopted daughter of Napoleon I., the grief will be sincere and heartfelt; but to those who do not feel the woe, but are obliged to bear the consequences, it is trying. Up to the present time there have been comparatively very few balls even among private individuals. The rage seems rather to be the *comédie de salon*, or *soirée musicale.* Both are very amusing, though I must say that the former is infinitely preferable when the actors and actresses are professional and not private individuals. This seeing some of Shakespeare's or Molière's heroes performed by some awkward duke or marquis, or listening for two hours to Madame the Countess of So-and-So's rendering of *Phèdre*, is anything but amusing. On the whole, the *soirée musicale* is a better entertainment; there you hear artists professional, and sometimes very celebrated.

The Countess de C. offered us a few nights since a most delectable treat of this sort. None but artistes of the first

talent played, while one performer, a pianist, electrified t company with his exquisite *rendition* of several most diffi *morceaux*—among others, Beethoven's "Grand Sonata i flat," Liszt's "Cantique d'Amours," and the "Hungari National March." Hans von Bulow is pianist to the K of Prussia, and is consequently well known in that count though I think his concert last Friday in the Salle *Pleyel* w his first appearance in Paris. His *jeu* reminds one of th famed Thalberg; though many amateurs consider him superi in passion and feeling, it is in the rapid and delicate passage that he excels. M. Bulow intends, I believe, visiting Londo when you will have an opportunity of judging for yoursel The Salle Erard, which has just been completed, was inaug rated last night by a concert given by the Messieurs Binfi These talented *artistes* gave for the first time some of th serious compositions, which were much admired. The e quisite *fantaisie*, "The soldier's dream," was given with gr fire and energy by the three brothers. The *prima donna* of th evening was Mdlle. Falconi; this artiste, although well kno in Paris as a singer of a very pure school, quite astonish the auditory by the delicacy, flexibility, and force of her voi Her rendering of the *Agnus Dei* was very much admired, while her variations on Tyrolean airs composed by herself w universally re-demanded. Mdlle. Falconi is cantatrice to th Grand Ducal Court of Saxe-Coburg. Richard Wagner's second grand concert has taken place at the Italian Opera-house. This composer is creating quite a *furore* in Paris, although nothing to compare to the excitement that is felt in regard to his compositions in Germany. One enthusiastic individual has placed, it is said, his large fortune entirely at the disposal of M. Wagner, determined to drain his coffers, if necessary, so as to establish the fame of his favourite composer.

M. Wagner intends, *on dit*, to bring to Paris next spring a whole company of singers, comprising the best talent in Germany, and put his operas on the stage of the Italiens in a style of magnificence heretofore unsurpassed. Without entering into a discussion in regard to the grandeur of M. Wagner's compositions, and the consequent incompleteness of our hitherto worshipped musical composers, I will say that I was struck with the *ensemble* and perfect rendering of the chorusses by the pupils of the Conservatoire, male and female. I observed that some of the former had a small band of embroidery on their coat collars in contradistinction to the rest. I asked the meaning of this, and was told that they were young men of the small towns of France found to possess good voices, and who were sent and kept in Paris at the expense of their town, for the purpose of getting the benefit of the musical education given at the Conservatoire. This is kept up until the pupil has appeared, and sees a prospect of gaining his livelihood through the medium of the talent which has been brought out by the means above mentioned. This rule applies also to young women, but their distinguishing ornament (a small brooch) was so small as to pass almost unnoticed. Truly, genius and heaven-born gifts are brought out in this country in a most careful way. How grateful should those people be for the benefits they receive! The subscription raised for the relief of Mdlle. Trochu, great granddaughter of Racine, the celebrated French writer, has already reached the sum of 25,000f. The general belief is, that this young lady is the last descendant of the great poet, but it is not so. A writing master at the College of Saint Denis has proved that his three daughters bear the same relationship to Racine as Mdlle. Trochu does. This young lady is to be placed in a convent at Blois, and educated at the expense of

the Society of Dramatic Authors. The Emperor and Empress subscribed liberally themselves, and caused the name of the Prince Impérial to be placed on Mdlle. Trochu's list for 1,000f.

On Saturday last, as the Empress's carriage was proceeding at a fast trot in the Avenue de l'Impératrice, a woman, holding a young child in her arms, threw herself between the horse of the *écuyer* and the carriage, for the purpose of presenting a petition to her Majesty. Both woman and child were overthrown. The Empress caused the carriage to be stopped, and kindly returned to the spot to see if the accident had been a fatal one. Fortunately, neither one nor the other had been injured. The Empress continued her ride, after leaving substantial marks of her sympathy with the woman, who certainly had committed an unpardonable imprudence in thus throwing herself almost under the wheels of the carriage. Constant information is given to these people that anyone desiring to present a petition may be sure of its meeting with serious attention if left at the gate of the Palace.

A case which, from the names of the parties concerned in it, will undoubtedly attract general attention, has just been submitted to the Civil Tribunal. M. Cabel, the husband of the favourite singer, Marie Cabel, the well-known and original *Dinorah*, has brought an action against M. Roqueplan, the manager of the Opéra Comique, and his wife, to have the latter's salary paid over into his (Cabel's) hands. It has long been a well-known fact that the *duo* between M. and Madame Cabel was not so melodious or so nicely harmonised as the one in the last act of the *Pardon de Ploërmel;* but M. Cabel was supposed to have received a pecuniary remuneration in return for an authorisation in writing to his wife to contract any engagement she pleased, and to receive per-

sonally her salary. It also appeared that M. Cabel had offered to forego his intention of submitting the case to the Court if Madame Cabel would consent to pay him the sum of 100,000f. This she refused, and hence the action, which was rejected, the tribunal authorising Madame Cabel to continue to receive her salary, and condemning M. Cabel to pay the costs. Many curious circumstances came out in the course of the trial. The fact of Madame Cabel having removed her furniture to the hotel of a foreign Ambassador, where, the hotel being neutral ground, it was safe from the hands of her husband; also the fact of this singer (who cannot be placed in the first rank in her profession, almost her whole theatrical career having been passed at the Opéra Comique), having in ten years' time earned the large sum of 600,000f., caused some astonishment. Universal sympathy was with Madame Cabel, who, besides being a most pleasing singer, lives in a modest and retired manner under the protection of her mother.

The *méthode* Chevé, a style of musical instruction which owes a portion of its renown to the fact of its being the original cause of the duel between M. About and M. Vaudin, has just been adopted in Russia. M. Chevé has been officially informed of this fact by Count Sollohut, Chamberlain to the Emperor Alexander II., and has been invited to visit Russia next spring to organise classes there as in France.

I had the pleasure a few days ago of examining a most beautiful book, which is certainly a *chef-d'œuvre* of its kind; it was printed expressly for the Emperor, and is the only copy extant. It is the offering of a man of good taste to a Sovereign well able to appreciate such a production. It is called the "Botanical Dictionary of Jean Jacques Rousseau." At the end of the volume is a magnificent group of original

drawings in water colours, painted on parchment by Redouté. Every one knows who Redouté was; he died twenty years ago in his eightieth year, with the merited reputation of being the fisrt flower painter after Vanhuysum, whose compatriot he was. The engravings from his works are nearly as valuable as the original paintings; and I do not think there is a library in London that does not possess his "Flora Borealis Americana," or his "Flore de Navarre." The work that has just been presented to the Emperor, and which has been examined with the most lively interest by her Majesty the Empress, represents every flower that has been so poetically described by Jean Jacques Rousseau. The brush of Redouté was alone worthy to compete with the pen of the author of "Emile." On the first page is a yellow lily of the most unrivalled bloom; next comes a hyacinth; then a chrysanthemum, and each petal has an appearance of reality that Nature herself could not surpass; next, fruits of all descriptions, and trees. Each of these pages, signed by the author, is worth 1,000f., and I counted thirty. I was afraid to open this book, afraid almost of withering those beautiful flowers; and when I had seen and admired all, I felt that one might sometimes envy the lot of princes; for if fortune does not always preserve them from the sufferings that are the common lot of mortals, she at least reserves them great joys. Few of these, in my opinion, would be comparable to the pleasure of possessing this Dictionary of Rousseau, illustrated by Redouté, the united production of two great but widely different geniuses. But I envy nothing. This book will be well placed in the library of Napoleon III.

LETTER XXXIX.

Prince Napoleon's Fête—Reception by Ministers of State—The Princess Metternich—Prince Edgar Ney's Masked Ball—The Procession of the "Bœuf Gras"—The War of Crinoline—Paris Improvements.

Paris, Saturday, February 18, 1860.

The "gay capital" deserves its name this week. The temporary lull in festivities has been followed by a great reaction. The Ministers of Marine, of Public Works, of Commerce, and of War have successively thrown open their salons to the *élite* of Paris, and the *fête* of the day, that given by the Prince Napoleon, which was indefinitely postponed on account of the death of his Imperial relative, has at length taken place. Only three hundred invitations were sent out, and among the first to arrive were their Majesties the Emperor and Empress. The entertainment commenced with two "proverbes" performed by the artistes of the Français. Got and Madeleine Brohan were especially complimented by their Majesties upon the excellent manner in which they had performed their separate *rôles*. After this, the Imperial visitors opened the ball by dancing a *quadrille d'honneur*. The Empress danced with Prince Metternich, the Emperor with the Princess Clotilde. Dancing did not terminate till three in the morning, the Emperor and Empress retiring about half-past one. The house or villa in which this *fête* was given is situated in the Avenue Montaigne. It is built after a model found in the ruins of Herculaneum, and the Roman style is preserved in all the decorations, both inside and out. The inscriptions which the ancient Romans were so fond of

writing over their doors have been carefully and skilfully imitated. His Imperial Highness has never lived in this house, and the *fête* just given may be called the inauguration of this beautiful mansion. This *soirée* took place on Tuesday.

On the same evening two of the Ministers threw open their *salons*, the Minister of Public Instruction, and the Minister of Commerce. Both of these *soirées dansantes* were extremely brilliant. The hotel of the Minister of Agriculture and Commerce has been recently decorated, and the principal dancing hall presented a fairy-like *coup d'œil*, filled as it was with exotics of the choicest descriptions. The ladies seemed to have raised the war cry as to who should have the most beautiful toilette, and the consequence was that their dresses, combined with the fine display of diamonds, gave to the already dazzling scene an immense *éclat*. The lioness of the season is undoubtedly the Princess Metternich, and she was at this ball remarkable by the beauty of her toilette. The princess is not pretty, but those persons intimate with her declare that she is attractive by her wit and ever-ready repartee. Madame Rouher played the hostess with that charm which characterizes her. The company, although so large in number, was quite select, and this fact contributed greatly to the pleasure of the ball. I cannot enumerate the grand dinners, small balls, and *fêtes* of all descriptions which have taken place during the week; all our political celebrities, Count de Morny, M. de Thouvenel, M. Baroche—all have received and been received. Everyone has profited by the last week before Lent; but a few more days, and fasting and prayer, constant and uninterrupted, will take the place, to all good Catholics, of the brilliant *fêtes* which they have been attending.

The evening following Prince Napoleon's *fête* a grand

masked ball took place at the residence of Prince Edgar Ney. The scene was such as can never be found except among the French; it is not customary to mention the names of persons supposed to be at masked balls, but I may state that a beautitul Scottish maiden, leaning on the arm of a very sedate Pierrot, seemed to put her little feet to the ground as though they had been used to mount the steps of a throne rather than to dancing indiscrimiately with whoever solicited the pleasure of her hand. At midnight the masks were removed, but the august Pierrot and the tender Scottish maid had disappeared. "Mornin;'s ruddy beams tinted the eastern sky" ere the assemblage at this charming *fête* dispersed.

But these are all the amusements of the noble and the wealthy. I will now speak of a ceremony which is about to take place, and which interests far more the great mass of the people than those I have mentioned above. I refer to the procession of the *Bœuf Gras*, which takes place to-morrow and the two following days. This ceremony dates back for centuries, and was formerly a very gorgeous and imposing affair; now it has degenerated into a mere name. The ceremony consists in a fine ox being placed in a cart, and led by "Druids" to the place of slaughter, the said "Druids" being no other than the butcher boys, who the next morning, their laurels and flowing robe being doffed, serve out beefsteaks and other tit-bits to the admiring crowd. What a matter-of-fact age we live in! There was a time when the young men in whose veins coursed quietly the gentlest blood in France were but too happy to take part in the procession of the *Bœuf Gras;* and many a noble dame now tells her wondering grandchildren that it was mounted on his fiery steed, and wearing the gorgeous costume of the ancient times, that their departed ancestor caught her fancy, and eventually

sought and won her hand. Now the mounted knights who lead and directed the procession are, at best, hired supernumeraries from the lower theatres, and the badness of your breakfast this morning is accounted for by seeing Marie, your cook, in a chariot drawn by eight horses, personating one of the three Graces. Surely it is time this absurd procession, which has no other result than that of collecting a crowd of persons in the street, should cease; it is no longer compatible with the present manners and customs, while the blowing of the horns and the loud shouts of the boys that run after the procession are, to say the least, a most disagreeable affair.

The weather has been so bad during the last fortnight that no toilette except the most simple can be worn. But the ladies, *en revanche*, dress at balls to the most extravagant extent. Mdlle. Evrazzus, a Mexican beauty and heiress, has joined the Princess Metternich's army against crinoline. But I do not doubt that both ladies will before long return to the despised and abused article, for, as both are tall and rather thin, they need its aid to give them a becoming *embonpoint.* I hear of some magnificent and novel costumes, to be worn at the grand ball which takes place at the Tuileries, to-morrow night. These I shall notice in my next letter.

Permit me at present to say a few words on the subject of Paris itself, where improvements and embellishments are every day progressing. Streets are being enlarged as if by magic, new roads are in course of formation, and boulevards are being laid down with a rapidity truly marvellous. The houses built in these new localities are upon the grandest scale; they are, in fact, palaces and hotels, and, for the most part, their style of architecture is admirable for its happy combination of originality and good taste. While on the subject of Palaces, however, and to cut short this *aperçu*

of the improved building arrangements of Paris, I must not omit to mention the three superb hotels which have just been constructed in the Faubourg St. Honoré. The fortunate proprietors of these magnificent residences are M. Achille Fould, the Minister, M. Louis Fould, and their sister, Madame Furtado. The mansion of M. Achille Fould opens upon the Rue Faubourg St. Honoré itself. The plans of the building were designed in the purest architectural taste by M. Pefuel. To give you an idea of the style in which the decorations of this noble mansion have been executed, it will be sufficient to say that the ornamental paintings of the *salle à manger* are from the pencils of artists no less celebrated than Appert and Godefroy. The designs are principally birds and flowers, the paintings in the salon are by Baudry and Mareschal. M. Labrouste has directed the construction of the hotel of M. Louis Fould, Rue de Berri. This edifice is built in the style prevalent during Louis XIII.'s period. It is remarkable for the chaste simplicity of its exterior and interior decorations. There are no paintings, but a magnificent gallery contains a priceless collection of coins, medals and enamels. The new hotel Furtado is built in the Rue de Valois du Roule. The interior embellishments are not yet finished, but in a few days the legion of artists who have so long been employed there will have concluded their labours. Among those engaged I may mention MM. Convens and Nolau, the celebrated decorators of the Opera-house. Faustin Besson, who painted the much-admired ceiling of the bed-chamber of the Eupress, has painted the ceiling of the *salle à manger* and of the ball room. The decorations of the card-room have been executed by Petit. The decorative paintings on the ceiling and panelings of a charming boudoir have been confided to Levy. This boudoir is also ornamented

with the richest silk hangings, embroidered in China. The entire arrangements of this hotel are in the style of Louis IV. I must not forget to mention the *salon de famille*. It is remarkable for two paintings by Levy; one of them represents the Four Ages of Man, the other represents the Genius of the Arts and Sciences. Luxury and exquisite taste, in fact, are everywhere blended; it is said that Madame Furtado has greatly interested herself in the supervision of all the arrangements.

LETTER XI.

Conclusion of the "Bœuf-Gras" Fêtes—"L'Amour" in trouble—Bon Mot by the Empress—Fancy Dress Ball at M. Fould's—Bal Costumé and Masqué at General Fleury's—Ball at the Tuileries—The Empress and Princess Clotilde.

Paris Saturday, February 25, 1860.

THAT inconstant and unaccommodating personage, the "clerk of the weather," has at length taken pity upon the poor deluged inhabitants of Paris, and has permitted his glorious majesty the sun to shine out once more in all his accustomed splendour. The immediate consequence of this is, that the lesser luminaries, the ladies, have immediately followed suite, and yesterday and to-day have left their carriages at the Place de la Concorde, to promenade the Champs Elysées in all the glory of velvet dresses and Russian furs. A stranger entering Paris to-day would really recognise the city of pleasures, so renowned in history and in fashionable novels for the salubrity and cheerfulness of the winter climate, and the gay and brilliant scenes in the fashionable promenades. The Carnival at Paris was once as celebrated as that of Rome, and, as far as regards brilliancy of private *fêtes*, it is still what it was in days of yore.

The last day's promenade of the Bœuf-Gras took place on Tuesday. At one o'clock the cavalcade entered the palace gates, and at almost the same moment their Majesties, with the little Prince, appeared on the balcony. After the knights, druids, and others had received, by order of the Emperor, copious draughts of good red wine, the poor little red-nosed, shivering child who personated *L'Amour*, and who was perched upon a sort of revolving pedestal, on the top of the chariot, was taken down, and had the honour of being escorted into the presence of their Majesties. Long and loud were the shouts of the assembled crowd outside, among the foremost of whom was to be seen a woman, who triumphantly declared she was *L'Amour's* mother. After a few moments delay, *L'Amour* re-appeared, being carried in the arms of one of the Emperor's *officiers d'ordonnance*, and replaced in the chariot; the little red, swollen hands grasped tightly as huge a quantity as possible of Boissier's best bonbons, while about his neck and shoulders a nice warm tartan had been placed by the hands of the Empress. Her Majesty told the Emperor (who suggested that the shawl would detract from the otherwise allegorical costume of the child) that "*l'amour* should never be allowed to grow cold," a very good *bon mot* by the way; but her Majesty's wit and power of repartee are well known. On the boulevards, poor *L'Amour* escaped from what might have been a dreadful accident. In some unexplained manner the Roman chariot took fire; *L'Amour*, intent on discussing his bonbons, and perhaps aware that he was impervious to flames, did not perceive it and was only aroused to a consciousness of danger by being dragged down in a most unpoetical manner from his elevation. The fire was soon extinguished, but the promenade ended most ignominiously.

I have three fine balls to mention this week, after which, until the *mi-Carême*, I shall have none to chronicle. On Saturday a grand fancy dress ball at M. Fould's. Prince Napoleon and Prince Metternich were, either by accident or design, dressed almost alike, in the Andaloux costume of the 18th century; Count de Nieuwerkerke appeared in a Henry IV. costume, got up with admirable exactitude; the Princess Clotilde appeared as a Genoese girl of the 17th century; the Princess Metternich, a striking black and white domino; and the Princess Mathilde and the young Princess Anna Murat as *marquises* in the reign of Louis XV. Altogether the ball was a fine one.

In point of splendid decorations and magnificent costumes, this ball was far eclipsed by the one given by General Fleury on Monday. This ball was *costumé* and *masqué*, and this last fact gave an *éclat* to the ceremony rarely seen even in Paris. The Emperor and Empress were present, though they kept closely masked till supper. His Majesty wore a most becoming costume of a Kabyle chief, and the Empress a charming rose-coloured domino. All the other costumes were of great beauty aud richness, and showed the good taste of the persons who wore them. The dancing was performed to the mellifluous strains of Strauss's band, the well-known composer having written some delightful waltzes and polkas for the occasion. The orchestra wore costumes of *Marquis sous Louis Quinzc*, composed of pink silk: while Strauss himself, in knee breeches and with powdered hair, according to the period, was literally blazing with the diamonds and other precious stones he has received from the different Sovereigns of Europe before whom he has had the honour of performing. During the whole night, and at different intervals, the *Sonneurs des Chasses Impériales*,

who were placed in the courtyards before and behind the dancing halls, made the air heavy with the inspiriting melody of their bugle horns, and executed a great number of the fine warlike *fanfares*. The supper-room presented a magnificent *coup d'œil*. The tables were groaning with the weight of luxuries; *pâté de foie gras, dinde truffée*, champagne—in fact, everything that Chevet's fertile brain could invent—were there; but the appetites were unusually ferocious, or Chevet's calculations were at fault, for there was not enough supper, and at four o'clock in the morning some unoffending *charcutiers* were aroused from their slumbers and summoned to bring forth all their stocks of cold chickens and veal pies.

On Sunday night took place the ball at the Tuileries. I, of course, recognising the full responsibility which my name involves, was obliged to go; and I was relieved by seeing a great number of our English notabilities present. I solemnly avow I did not dance till past twelve. The Empress wore a dress at once peculiar and beautiful. Over the familiar skirt of *tulle bouillonné* was thrown a short upper skirt of white watered silk, festooned up on both sides with wide bands of black velvet, embroidered with gold. Upon her head was placed a high crown of polished gold, upon which was imprinted in black enamel some Egyptian hieroglyphics. There was a necklace and bracelets to match. The Princess Clotilde was present. Her Imperial Highness is far from pretty, but a distinguished French political economist speaking of her at the ball, declared he considered her the most extraordinarily endowed lady in Europe. She speaks fluently five languages, and is a thorough Greek and Latin scholar; is well acquainted with the works of all the ancient and modern poets, and is particularly fond of quoting Shakspeare. Her character, in spite of her extreme youth,



is very firm—this her face indicates. The Empress is very fond of her young relative.

A pleasing incident occurred at the last ball at Court. A handsome young artilleryman (French), having but one arm, was ineffectually striving to buckle on his sword-belt. An English officer standing by smilingly came to his aid, and while the two sons of Mars were thus occupied the Emperor passed. Of course the belt was dropped, and, eyes fixed and hands down, our young heroes saluted the Emperor. His Majesty bowed graciously to the Englishman, and then said to the Frenchman, "Where did you lose your arm?" "At Solferino, Sire," was the reply. "Have you had no recompense?" "None, Sire." Send me your name to-morrow, and if your services have been honourable you shall have the cross of the Legion of Honour." His Majesty passed on, and I saw the young Englishman, who had so kindly performed the office of *femme de chambre* to the other, shaking hands and congratulating the Frenchman with great warmth. Valour always meets with sympathy in valorous hearts.

LETTER XLI.

Opening of the Legislative Session—Enthusiasm of the People—Lenten Entertainments—"Puss in Boots" at the late Ball given by General Fleury—Love and War in the Balance, and Terrible Resolve of the Ladies of Paris.

Paris, Saturday, March 3, 1860.

THE fine hall, in which the ceremony of the opening of the Legislative Session by the Emperor in person took place, is in the new portion of the Palace of the Louvre, which was

inaugurated last year on the occasion of this same anniversary ceremony. Since then it has been much adorned, many of the ornaments, which were then only temporary, having been beautifully executed according to the original design. At the lower extremity of the hall was the throne chair for the Emperor, placed upon a platform elevated by some dozen steps from the floor. The platform as well as the steps was entirely carpetted with red velvet, and over the throne chair, was draped, something in the style of a warrior's tent, the same rich material entirely studded with golden bees. To the right of the Emperor was a seat for Prince Napoleon, and one for Prince Jérome; to the left, others for the three Princes of the Murat family. On the right hand of the Throne was a raised estrade for the Empress, with seats to her right and left for the Princesses of the Imperial Family. A gallery running the entire length of the hall was filled with beautifully dressed ladies, while the parterre was occupied by the Council of State, the senators, deputies, clergy, prefects, &c. At twelve o'clock not an empty place was to be seen in the hall, except those reserved for the Imperial Family, and at one o'clock precisely the Empress was announced, and her Majesty entered followed by the Princesses Clotilde, Mathilde, and Murat, and by the great officers of the Empress's household, the grand mistress, the ladies of honour, and the ladies of the palace on duty that day. The Empress wore a simple and most becoming toilette—a dress of pale grey moire antique, with two skirts, the upper one trimmed up the sides with violet-coloured velvet. A large shawl of black Chantilly lace, a white bonnet, trimmed across the top inside with a black velvet rouleau, in the centre of which, and almost reposing on the forehead, was a small diamond star. No trimming whatever on the outside of the bonnet. The Prin-

cess Clotilde wore a pale blue silk, with flounces halfway up the skirts; a white Brussels shawl, and a white crape bonnet trimmed inside and out with blue feathers, curtain and strings of blue taffetas. The Princess Mathilde wore a very rich toilette, but a most unbecoming one on account of the quantity of high colours which composed it. A dress of mauve satin, an orange-coloured cachmere embroidered with gold, white bonnet. Princess Murat a grey satin dress and bonnet to match. The ladies of honour ranged themselves behind the Imperial Family, the Princess d'Essling standing immediately behind the Empress's chair. At a little past one one o'clock an officer of the ceremonies announced the Emperor, and the whole assembly rose, while from the large door opposite the throne his Majesty's *cortège* entered, while the cannon of the Invalides announced to those assembled outside the arrival of his Majesty. Loud cries of "Vive l'Empereur," "Vive l'Impératrice," resounded through the hall; the Emperor ascended the throne, Prince Napoleon sitting on his right. Prince Jérome was not present, being still ill, The Grand Master of the Ceremonies then requested all to to be seated, and the Emperor read, in a very distinct voice, the speech which, long ere this, you have laid before your readers. After the speech, the Minister of State received the oaths of allegiance to the Emperor of the new members of the Legislative Body, and the Emperor rose and left the hall amidst cries of "Vive l'Empereur," "Vive la dynastie Napoléonienne." A salute of artillery announced that the ceremony had terminated.

If the scene inside the Salle des Etats was brilliant, comprising as it did all the power, wealth, rank, and beauty of Paris, the *coup d'œil* outside was hardly less striking. The sun shone forth most gorgeously, while all along that most

picturesque street, the Rue de Rivoli, were assembled the gay and happy French working people. Nursemaids with their precious charges, pretty little children, *grisettes*, street vendors of all kinds—in fact, from the gate of the Palace to the Place de la Concorde was to be seen a happy, laughing, gay, contented human mass; the fine state-carriages of the different ambassadors (perhaps the grandest of these is the beautiful equipage of Lord Cowley) rolling quickly along the smooth street, gave infinite pleasure to these people: and when about half an hour later the Empress came out to take her afternoon drive, their enthusiasm and glee knew no bounds. As that graceful head inclined slowly in response to the acclamations many was the wish that went up for her welfare; I thought that if her Majesty could hear the quiet praises of the people, it would please her even more than the loud shouts. The French people think the Empress the very personification of all that is good and noble in a woman, and her private and unostentatious manner of giving charities has made a great impression upon them.

In spite of Lent, Paris is very gay; although no invitations are issued for balls or even dancing parties, our fashionables are giving musical *soirées*, private theatricals, &c., which generally terminate in dancing. A very fashionable amusement this year is a sort of theatrical entertainment, which cannot exactly be called private theatricals, as those who perform are professionals, regularly engaged for the evening. It is hardly necessary to say that Bressant, Got, Mmes. Plessy and Brohan are greatly in demand for this style of entertainment, the quiet and elegant school of the actors of the Français being well suited for drawing-roon entertainments.

In a former letter I spoke of a brilliant ball given by

General Fleury last week. Want of space obliged me to omit some interesting details, which may yet be mentioned. The final cotillion was led off by the Princess Clotilde, who wore a most becoming costume as *Amphytrite, déesse des ondes*. The Princess Mathilde appeared as an Indian queen. The Princess Metternich wore a splendid Louis XV. costume, quite covered with diamonds. The young Count de Choiseul, was dressed as a lady of the reign of Louis XV. He remained masked till supper, and caused great amusement by his *spirituel* and *lady-like* conversation. One of the great features of the evening was a character quadrille, the persons dancing all personating fairy-tale celebrities. The Countess de Vie was dressed as Puss-in-boots. I can assure your lady readers that it was not an unbecoming costume. Large bucket topboots, large trousers trimmed with swan's-down, jacket of cat's-skin, and a sort of cat's-head reposing on her forehead. What was extremely amusing was the *verve* with which the guests kept up the character they were representing. I observed that everybody was announced by the name of his character. One young lady, whose name I did not learn, personated snow; her costume was perfect and very becoming. I thought if the snow which had caused so much suffering to Captain M'Clintock and his gallant crew had taken the form which this young lady gave it, the gallant knight would never have returned to us from those bleak regions.

We are now in the midst of great political agitation, *àpropos* of which I must let you into a great secret. A petition of a most peculiar kind is soon to be presented to her Majesty the Empress of the French. For some time past the ladies have perceived a great falling off on the part of the sterner sex in their gallantry; politics have become of so engrossing a nature that the gentlemen seem disposed to

forego those *petits soins* so essential to the fair sex, and at réunions, or even balls, they crowd together, forgetting the ladies, and only intent upon ascertaining what the Pope will do, whether the annexation will take place, &c. One hears confused murmurs. Excommunication, Austro-Russian alliance, Savoy, Nice, Garibaldi, Volunteer Movement, are words that arrive indistinctly to our ears; instead of, lovely coiffure! beautiful toillette! what grace! splendid eyes! and other such phrases, so welcome to ladies. But this is not the worst phase of the great political preoccupation that I refer to. The want of compliment could be borne, but alas! the gentlemen, usually so attentive, so *empressé* the moment the music begins, now go on talking politics even during the playing by Strauss's band of the most *dansant* polka; and although the quick, lively *deux temps* does seem to recall the recreant knights to a sense of what the ladies are there for, they mutter as they quickly glide over the waxed floors—Cavour's circular! M. de Thouvenel's despatch!—while some of them, more absent-minded than the rest, inquire with visible anxiety, "*Croyez-vous, Madame, que nous aurons la guerre?*" Driven to desperation by this political absorption of their rights, the ladies of Paris have met, and resolved that, By crinoline, they would stand it no longer; and so they are to petition the Empress for the promulgation of an order forbidding, on pain of her Majesty's greatest displeasure, the introduction of politics into the *salons*. You may be disposed to doubt this intelligence, the importance of which will bring upon you a shower of contradictions from the press in general, and the *Indépendance Belge* in particular, but rest assured that my statement is correct. The petition I refer to is even now signed by some of the noblest names n France, and so I feel it my duty to give you the information, even at the risk of

causing another fall of the Consols or a panic at our Bourse. Assured by me of the authority of my announcement, pray let no fears of contradictory *Communiqués* prevent your publishing the intelligence.

LETTER XLII.

A Fortnight's Rain—Visit to the Madeleine—Lord and Lady Cowley's Reception—The Duchess of Malakoff—Theatrical Entertainments—Prince Poniatowski's New Opera, and Brilliant Aspect of the Opera House.

Saturday, March 17, 1860.

SOMEBODY once wrote a very pretty little ode dedicated to "Rain," complimenting it in the highest terms upon "the pleasant patter, patter, of the rain upon the roof," inviting the said "patter, patter," to come at all times and seasons, and assuring it that its presence was always welcome to the inhabitants of this mundane sphere. I fear this ode would be but little appreciated in Paris just now. Since my last letter the rain has hardly ceased an hour, and imprecations, "not loud, but deep," have been uttered against the offending elements. In England we look upon the rain as a natural event; in fact, we are so used to it that if some one does not mention the fact of its being fine weather, we should never think of going out walking unaccompanied by that useful friend, our umbrella. Here it is different: all weathers are supportable to the French, even such piercing cold as was experienced at the beginning of this winter; but preserve them from *la pluie!* Madame la Marquise cannot take her drive in the Bois, the *grisette* cannot show on the Boulevards her gorgeous new cap and embroidered white

apron; the streets are deserted by all except those having positive business. The only persons who do not complain are the managers of theatres—the rain drives in spectators, who, if the weather had been fine, would have walked on the Boulevards looking at the fine shops; the *cafés*, too, are always crowded in rainy weather. But with these two exceptions, I think the whole population of Paris, if put to the vote, would decide upon abolishing that great promoter of *ennui*, the rain.

I strolled into the Madeleine yesterday, more anxious, I must own, to look at the Lent decorations of this beautiful church than desirous of participating in the service then going on. There is something very impressive in the immensity of the Madeleine. Man's littleness is so apparent—here in the very heart of this noisy Paris no sound ever penetrates those thick walls—the outer world is so shut out that one's thoughts are concentrated upon the Almighty Being to whose glory the noble building was reared. To Protestants, the theatrically grand decorations will, of course, never meet with favour, but one cannot but admire the manner in which Catholics, young and old, rich and poor, irrespectively bow themselves down in prayer. Glancing around the church I saw some faces which, without being perfectly familiar, still bore to my mind the impression of having been seen before. Yes, certainly, I was not mistaken; that lady enveloped in dark furs, who was reading her prayers so devotedly, was the same person who at General Fleury's grand masked ball attracted such general admiration as the valorous and youthful Jack the Giant-killer. I rose to leave the church, and close by the door another familiar face met my view: a young girl, evidently belonging to the working class, was saying over her beads

with a rapidity which a bearded monk might have envied; the mass of brown curls, that *nez retroussé*—it was Venus—sea-born Venus—who for three mortal days promenaded Paris, holding the hand of Love, both being seated in a Roman chariot drawn by eight horses, and preceded by the Bœuf Gras for 1860, Solferino by name. Venus was not so handsome wlthout the high crown which she wore when taking part in the procession, but, *en revanche*, she had an air of perfect cleanliness in her white cap and apron, which the faded red toga lacked entirely. Truly this seeking after pleasure at any price, as long as it does not interfere with religion, is a strange feature in the French character.

On Tuesday, the 28th of February, Lord and Lady Cowley threw open the fine *salons* of their hotel in the Faubourg St. Honoré, to receive the beauty and *élite* of the French and English society now in Paris. This reception, which was an exceedingly brilliant one, is the first since the partial demolition of the embassy more than a year ago. Another reception has taken place, and these weekly *réunions* will doubtless continue till the end of the season. As Lent advances the gaieties are diminishing, and, besides weekly receptions, the *grand monde* of Paris has little amusement. Two of our first Faubourg St. Germain families have been thrown into mourning by the death of Lady Granville; this circumstance, of course, goes far in rendering *triste* the end of the season.

The Duchess de Malakoff was *accouchée* some days since. The little stranger is a daughter. The Empress, on hearing the news, immediately called upon the duchess. The Princess Mathilde was with her when the Empress arrived. Prince Napoleon and the Princess Clotilde also called. The hotel of the Légion d'Honneur, the residence of the

duke and duchess, has been perfectly besieged since the happy event by members of families of the aristocratic Faubourg St. Germain, as well as the high dignitaries attached to the Emperor, all anxious to know the state of health of the young mother and child.

If Lent has in a measure put an end to the dancing *soirées*, it has not certainly done away with the brilliancy of our own theatrical entertainments. The reappearance of Tamberlik at the Italiens has brought forth, as last year, all the *élite* of Paris to listen to his magic strains. The opera of *Otello* creates quite as much *furore* as last year, so I think there is little probability of the production of any novelty for this great favourite. But the event of the week in the musical line has been Prince Poniatowski's new opera, called *Pierre de Médicis*. This, like all new productions, will, of course, bring forth a volley of praise and censure, but no one can deny that it is a work of great importance and of great merit. But the musical talent of the Prince is well known. The *coup d'œil* presented on the first night was most brilliant; for days before the sale of tickets was stopped, there being no places to dispose of. From the Imperial *loge* to the uppermost row were to be seen ladies of the *beau monde*. It was a living museum, brilliant with celebrities, with beauty, and with magnificent toilettes. I was less struck with the fine appearance of the ladies than with the irreproachable *tenue* of the gentlemen. It called to mind the Italian Opera at London in its ancient and glorious days. Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress, attended by a numerous and brilliant *suite*, occupied the Imperial *loge*. The Emperor, in simple evening dress, wore the decoration of the Legion of Honour. The Empress wore a most becoming *toilette* of white silk, with a diamond crown, neck-

lace, and bracelets. Her Majesty was looking most beautiful. The Princess Clotilde occupied her box in the centre of the *salle*. Madame Fould and Lady Cowley occupied the same *loge*. The Princess Metternich was present, and wore more than two millions worth of diamonds. My memory fails to record the names of the persons who contributed by their presence to make this the most brilliant theatrical representation offered this year. Never have I seen more enthusiasm than that which greeted the name of the author when announced at the termination of this *chef d'œuvre*. The Emperor frequently gave the signal for applause. Their Majesties remained till the fall of the curtain, and were saluted on entering and leaving the theatre with loud cries of "Vive l'Empereur," not uttered by the vulgar mouths of a noisy crowd, but issuing from the possessors of the noblest and grandest names in Europe. Gueymard sang and looked better in *Pierre de Médicis* than he has done for years, while Madame Gueymard, as *Laura*, stamped herself as one of the best singers of the day. We may look upon the bill of the Grand Opera as stereotyped for the next three months, for there is little probability of *Pierre de Médicis* disappearing from its heading before that time. The Emperor, it is said, has addressed a letter of congratulation to the noble friend who has proved himself a prince by talent as well as by birth.

LETTER XLIII.

Termination of the Easter Holidays—The Last Day of Long-champs—Crinoline Triumphant—The Spring Fashions and our Grandmothers' Gloves—The Stabat Mater at the Italiens.—Marriages in High Life—The Imperial Chapel—A Suppliant for Pardon.

Paris, Tuesday, April 10, 1860.

The Easter holidays are over. The school-children, who for the past week have been laughing, romping, and sight-seeing in Paris, under the guidance of their happy parents, are now forced to return to the books which have been so completely forgotten for a week. Reluctantly enough they go; we are reluctant to lose them, too; for has not their presence in the public gardens, the Tuileries, and Champs Elysées, particularly, been to us all a source of pleasure and amusement? What would be the bright sunshine, the dashing fountains, the balmy air, the songs of birds, the sweet-scented flowers, if the merry laugh of happy childhood were not mingled with it all to lend a powerful *attrait* to this charming scene? There are others besides the children who will regret that Easter is over: from the finest lady in her carriage down to the bright-eyed *grisette*, all took pleasure in the motley crowd that Good Friday showed us. Good Friday is the last day of Long-champs; this time-honoured ceremony, which was formerly a purely religious one, has now degenerated into a mere drive for pleaure. The object of the faithful in former days was to procure some sort of conveyance, no matter what, to reach the Abbey of Long-champs, there to offer up prayers for the remission of sins

committed during the winter months. Of course the high and noble, as well as the poor and lowly, had equal need of absolution, and the consequence was, that the string of vehicles of all descriptions going to the shrine was marvellous in its incongruous confusion. We have still the same motley show of conveyances, from the duke's fine calèche *à la Daumont*, to the washerwoman's clothes cart; but, alas, the object now is to see and be seen, where formerly it was to pray and to be prayed for. This year we were favoured with delightful weather. The Champs Elyseés, from the Place de la Concorde to the Arc de Triomphe, were crowed on either side with gay, happy, laughing people. It was the opening day of the spring fashions. Many a poor little *modiste* had worked hard the night before to get that *chapeau* ready for the afternoon's promenade on Good Friday. On that day the great crinoline struggle was renewed, and the advocates on each side, of course, hoped for the utter demolition of their antagonists. But, in my humble opinion, the matter still rests in *statu quo*, the advantage remaining on the side of the crinoline wearers. It is true that some of the leaders of the *ton* (amongst others the Princess de Metternich and Mdlle. Evrazzus) have decided upon appearing without the much abused article; but, on the other hand, the Comtesses de Morny and Walewski have enrolled themselves under the Imperial banner, and persist in wearing crinoline. Can any fashion gain that Eugénie does not sanction? It is not very likely; and then, again, there is another motive that, in conjunction with the convenience of the crinoline, will at least for a time prevent its desertion by the ladies. In the desire to appear *outré*, that class which in Paris is large enough to form an army, and which is delicately but comprehensively stigmatised by the name of the *Demi-Monde*, has entirely left

off crinoline, and its members may be seen any day in the principal thoroughfares crinolineless, starched peticoatless—good portraitures of that renowned English dairymaid, Dorothy Draggletail. This, then, is the idea to be taken from my remarks—for carriage and for dinner, and indoor dress, crinoline may be laid aside if desired; but for walking it is *de rigueur*, on account of the reasons I have mentioned above. There is nothing very new in the way of spring fashions, the weather being still so undecided that our *élégantes* do not venture anything very striking. On Good Friday it was too warm for cachemere shawls which are always worn at this season, so I saw a great many *casaques* of black silk, like those worn last year, except that they do not fit tight to the waist, and that when entirely plain they have a small pélérine of Chantilly lace, or guipure thrown over the shoulders. The gold trimmings so extensively used in bonnets during the winter have given place to flowers, which are much prettier, as they are simpler. I observed that a flower, which has been neglected by those who imitate those lovely offerings of nature, the heartsease, is used this year. I saw a white crape bonnet trimmed with them; they were placed above the curtain and continued all round the front of the bonnet—white strings, and a small wreath of the same flowers across the top. It was very simple, yet exceedingly rich. Light silks, with small flounces, are much worn; and, by way of novelty, the dressmakers separate the flounces at every breadth, and bring them up to the waist. This makes a very pretty effect, but there must not be more than four or five flounces. The wheel of fashion, in making a revolution, has fallen this spring upon an object that has remained for the last twenty years almost stationary—I refer to gloves, and shall perhaps astonish your fair readers by announcing that

at the Italiens the other night I saw gloves that were fashionable in their great-grandmothers' time. They reached quite up to the elbow, and it must have required a full hour to have buttoned so many buttons. They are not pretty, and prevent wearing those graceful ornaments, bracelets. I hear they will be worn for out-door dress this summer. I doubt it, as they would necessitate the open undersleeve, which has been so entirely abandoned for walking or carriage dress for the last three years.

The management of the Italiens was evidently under the impression that the Easter Eve's entertainment must partake in some way of the religious character of the day it preceded, and so the *Stabat Mater* was chosen. The house was crowded, but I observed that a decided *demi-toilette* replaced the usual *grande tenue* used for this theatre. Tamberlik, Badiali, Morini, and Manfredi, Alboni, Penco, and Marie Battu, looked dreadfully melancholy and solemn, as they sat in stiff and grief-stricken *fauteuils* in front of the stage, backed up by an amphitheatre of chorus behind them. Rossini has produced nothing diviner than his *Stabat Mater*, but it is a great mistake to give it as a substitute for opera behind the footlights, where it is not easy to forget *La Traviata* or *Il Barbiere*. It was about as incongruous as would have been a galop down the centre aisle of the Madeleine. Nobody was sorry when half-past ten arrived, and the curtain fell. It is scarcely possible for Protestantism to enter into the spirit of the deep religious passion of this grand Catholic hymn, which has been so fitly translated into music from the old monkish Latin of the breviary. How can we, for instance, understand being "inebriated with the Cross?" Yet this is but a feeble expression for the devotional raptures not unfamiliar to the higher flights of Catholic ecstacy. The

Stabat Mater should never be heard but in a church; its production at the Italiens was, to say the least of it, in excessive bad taste.

The fashionable wedding of the week is that of the Marquis des Portes and a fair young American *belle* and heiress —of course, as nearly all our pretty young transatlantic cousins who come to Paris are—Mademoiselle Adèle H——. It is now in progress. A marriage here is not the expeditious business which it is across the Channel. It is an affair of several days, including as many repetitions of ceremonies. The signing of the contract was the first act of the drama, and was illustrated by a brilliant *soirée* on Monday night, at the hotel of the bride's parents. "All the faubourg" were there, and signed the contract as witnesses. To-day (Tuesday) the civil ceremony takes place at the Mairie. To-morrow will be devoted to the two necessary operations of the Catholic marriage to bind one party, and to the Protestant ceremony for the other. It is to be hoped that the triple knot will then be securely tied. On the evening of the signing of the contract the bride exercised to the full the bridal right of looking lovely, while the array of wedding presents would have been sufficient to set up a fashionable jeweller's shop. In the course of the evening, however, its fair heroine had a narrow escape from a fate which would have saddened all Paris. The cloud of white tulle in which she was enveloped took fire; Happily it was extinguished before it could do any other injury than the destruction of a breadth or two of gauze, and the casting of a shade of agitated paleness on a beautiful countenance.

It has always been a matter of extreme difficulty to obtain seats in the imperial chapel of the Tuileries. The chapel is small, and the solicitations numerous. Those who do not

possess that useful article, a "friend at Court," can hardly hope to obtain this favour. Last Sunday, after the service, as their Majesties were leaving the chapel, a lady, extremely well dressed, and holding an interesting child by the hand, rushed forward, and thowing herself at the feet of the Emperor, handed a petition to his Majesty. The Emperor looked surprised, but took the petition, and listened to the supplicant, who demanded grace for her husband, condemned for having given false testimony. At the end of her recital, the Emperor gave his hand to the lady, whose streaming eyes and broken tones denoted her grief, and, raising her up, he assured her that her petition should be examined into. There is little doubt that the solicited pardon will be accorded, if the claims of justice should not prove to be at variance with the Emperor's clemency. As I gazed upon the face of the Emperor as he took the petition, I almost envied him the greatest privilege conferred upon him by his Imperial rank—the right to pardon.

LETTER XLIV.

The Weather—The Princess Mathilde's Last Ball—Charades—The Coming Ball at the Hotel d'Albe—The Princess Clotilde's Gift—Fashionable Arrivals—The Races—Hare Hunting Extraordinary—Louis Philippe and M. Moet.

Paris, Thursday, April 19, 1860.

THE weather—always a safe and agreeable topic for a flagging conversation—is now the engrossing subject in the Parisian mind. No one remembers such a backward spring; and our indignation is aroused when we recollect that on Good Friday,

nearly a fortnight ago, the weather was mild and balmy, and that it is now cold, cheerless, and wintry. The April of the proverb, with its "showers which bring forth May flowers," seems to exist no longer. In its place has come a gusty, dusty, cold, disagreeable month. However, the old saying, that "it is an ill wind that blows nobody good," applies in this instance, as, while the weather continues cold, balls and *soirées* are still kept up. The first genial breath of summer, and all our fashionable birds are on the wing.

Thursday night last, her Highness the Princess Mathilde gave her last ball of the season. All the Imperial family were present, as well as the *élite* of the Parisian world. Their Majesties retired about one o'clock, but the Princess Clotilde remained for the cotillion, which began about three. This spirited dance was led off by her Imperial Highness and the Prince Czartoryski. The *salons* of the Princess Mathilde are more sumptuous than vast, and furnished in a style that shows the exquisitely artistic taste of the fair owner. The Duchess de Tascher sent out last week a few select invitations for a charade to be performed at her hotel. The *artistes* were all members of the *haute aristocratie*, and the piece was written by one of our *spirituel* authors expressly for the occasion. A young English lady, Miss P—, played a part with great *verve* and spirit, her slight English accent lending an additional charm to her beautiful face and pleasing manners. The great topic of conversation at present is the ball which is yet to come off at the Hôtel d'Albe. One cannot form an idea of the immense preparations now taking place inside the hotel, but one can judge of the proportions of the *fête* by the works visible from the outside, and which, in reality, double the size of this magnificent dwelling. It would be interesting to ascertain the exact number of work-people employed at the

present time, in their different capacities, in getting things ready for this extraordinary ball. Another curious fact would be the value of the costumes in the ball-room when all the guests are assembled. I have seen a costume representing Fire, which cost, without including jewels, 7,000 francs, or £280 sterling. It is to be worn by one of the brightest stars of the galaxy of strangers in Paris; her dress cannot fail to attract attention—that is, if her flashing black eyes and glossy locks do not engross it all. But I must not describe any more costumes before the ball takes place, which will be next Tuesday, the 24th of April. I hope to be able to give your fair readers a satisfactory *compte-rendu* of this grand Imperial *fête*. There have been several concerts this week at the Tuileries; Tamberlik, Alboni, and Penco have been, of course, the stars. At the last concert, after one of Alboni's beautiful cavatinas, which entrance the listener, the favorite singer seated herself, and being warm began fanning herself with her handkerchief. The Princess Clotilde rose, and handing her own fan to the cantratice, begged her to accept it as a souvenir of the pleasure she had afforded her by the delicious strains she had just uttered. It is said Alboni, who has often received royal gifts before, never was so charmed as with this. The fan is a very handsome one, valued at 2,000f.

In the list of fashionable arrivals in Paris, I observe the names of the Comte and Comtesse Castellane. For three years this noble family has not been seen in the Parisian world, the death of a near relative caused them to retire to their estates in the country. Their return to the *monde* is hailed with delight by the pleasure-lovers; for who has not heard of the gorgeous *fêtes* which have been given in the Hôtel Castellane? Perhaps in no other private hôtel in Paris are united so many means of enjoyment as in the Castellane domain—an im-

mense ball room, never used for any other purpose; supper room adjoining; and, above all, a magnificent theatre, with its parterre, its orchestra, its private boxes, fine scenery, green room, and dressing rooms; a very large theatre, too, but which seems small in comparison with the immense rooms which surround it. It is too late in the season for a ball here, but no doubt next winter will see reunited in these noble halls the flower of the youth of France, and the select from all parts of the world.

Last Sunday there were races at the Bois de Boulogne. Business commenced at two o'clock, and during the first two races the attendance was small; but about half-past three the "tribunes" began to fill, and a great number of carriages arrived. I observed some fine four-in-hands; that of the Count de Morny attracted particular attention by the beauty of the horses and the good taste of the entire turn-out. The Stand reserved for the Jockey Club was crowded with its aristocratic members. Among the ladies of the *beau monde* present I remarked the Duchess of Fitz-James, the Baroness Rothschild, the Comtesse de Greffulhe, the Countess de la Rochefoucauld, Lady Petre, Lady Barrington, and the Countess de Morny. The weather was fine until just before the last race, when the rain fell in torrents. The Empress had sent word that she would be present; but her Majesty arrived at the course just as the rain began to fall, and consequently the horses' heads were immediately turned towards home. It was an amusing sight, the immense number of carriages being driven as fast as possible to get out of the pelting storm, and the unlucky foot-passengers running at full speed to the nearest place of shelter. It seems hard, on days when there are races at the Bois, that omnibuses and other cheap modes of conveyance should not be allowed to cross the Bois de

Boulogne. On ordinary occasions it is very well, as it secures a charming and agreeable ride to those in carriages. What can be more unpleasant than to be jostled by an omnibus when one is taking a pleasure drive in a pleasure garden? But on racing days it is different. The consequence of this exclusion is, that the beautiful field of Longchamps lacks that variety, that heterogeneous mixture that we see in England, and which really contributes greatly to the vivacity of the scene. As the case now stands, seeing a race is only possible to those who have their own carriages, or who can afford to hire one for the day at some absurd price. An amusing incident occurred last Sunday during the interval between two races. A hare, evidently having escaped from some place in the vicinity, came deliberately walking along the race track, and stopped in front of the tribunes, gazing with astonishment on the numerous spectators. A sense of danger evidently came upon the poor little animal; for it ran off, followed by more than three hundred pursuers, all anxious to catch it. They formed a large circle around the hare, and gradually closed in upon it. In spite of their well-managed efforts, the hare was just on the point of escaping, when a young Englishman literally threw himself upon it, and succeeded in capturing and walking away with his prize. This little incident caused much amusement, and loud cheers of approbation greeted the blushing victor as he returned to his seat. As I write the snow is falling heavily; what a change from the delightful balmy weather when I penned my last letter! The little songsters are now hushed, the leaves and buds chilled and frozen—in fact, we have November weather at the end of April.

I cannot refrain from giving you a most amusing anecdote of the late King. Louis Philippe was making a voyage in the east of France, and graciously accepted a dinner offered him

by Monsieur Moet, whose name and excellent champagne are synonymous. It is needless to state that the sparkling liquid was of the choicest kind and in great profusion. "Will your Majesty permit me to offer you another glass of this champagne?" asked the delighted vine-grower. "It is delicious, monsieur—most delicious," replied the Citizen King with *bonhomie;* "but I fear intoxication—yes, I fear intoxication." Here Monsieur d'Argout, who was seated on the other side of the King, and who judged the moment favourable for a little courtier-like flattery, exclaimed, "Sire, the only intoxication that can take place here to-night is that in which your faithful subjects are plunged by your Majesty's much-desired presence." "The intoxication will be but of short duration, Sire," said M. Moet, to the intense disgust of the courtier. M. Moet's reply was not intended, however, as it seemed; he was deaf, and had just understood the King's reply, without having heard the rejoinder of the courtier, which he thus rendered so ridiculous.

LETTER XLV.

Grand Fancy Ball given by the Empress Eugénie.

Paris, Wednesday, April 25, 1860.

In my last letter, I promised I would give your readers an account of the Empress's ball, and I lose no time in so doing.

The grand *bal costumé* that was to have taken place ten days ago was deferred until last night, as many say, because of the late political troubles in Spain, some of her Majesty's relatives being therein complicated. Be that as it may, last

night was the eventful one that was to witness the *éclat* of an affair that had thus assumed more than usual importance, and at an early hour of the evening the Champs Elysées was filled with mounted gendarmes and sergents-de-ville, all occupied in clearing the wide avenue, so that the many equipages bearing their fair loads to the Hotel d'Albe might the more easily approach that magnificent residence. By ten o'clock a line of carriages reaching almost the entire avenue, to the Place de la Concorde was slowly wending its way along towards the brilliant ball-rooms. The *invités*, as they arrived, alighted amid a number of gorgeously dressed servants wearing the Imperial livery and ranged on each side of the entrance, which was draped with rich velvet and gilded hangings. Passing through a still more richly decorated ante-chamber, which, like the room first entered, had been erected for the occasion, those arriving were met by the Duke and Duchess de Tascher de la Pagerie. The two rooms I have just mentioned were lined with flowers and evergreens, and seemed really beautiful, until, having bowed to the Duke and Duchess, you entered the ball-rooms. Then the magnicence that met the gaze of the enraptured guest quite eclipsed all that was previously seen. The dancing-room had been erected for this great *fête*, and whatever the most exquisite taste could suggest had been lavished upon its decoration. At the end of the room, a band of musicians was hidden in a niche in the wall behind flowers and evergreens blooming and flagrant; but above the flowers and vines was to be seen Strauss waving his wand, while sweet music filled with richest tones the brilliant halls that at my entrance were already crowded with a gay and dazzling throng.

I must not attempt to describe all the beautiful costumes I saw; the task were an endless one. In fact it took some

time for me to get accustomed to the splendour of the scene, during which queens and peasant girls, ladies of high degree and of low, courtiers, knights, magicians, polichinels, sailors, soldiers, Turks, Arabs, money-lenders, Christians, and Infidels—and even lions, tigers, and bears—were moving around and about me, all glittering and gay, all laughing and talking merrily, while over all rose and fell the music in dulcet cadence, rendering t a scene of enchantment.

Noticeable among those most gorgeously dressed were several gentlemen (I beg pardon of the ladies for leaving them to be mentioned last, but I am using my sex's privilege), whose locks and beards betrayed them as the sons of *Perfide Albion*. Their rich Henry the Eighth costumes were sparkling with the most valuable jewels, while among them strode a gallant Knight of the Garter (of this same knight I shall have more to say when I speak of the dancing). Certainly among the most beautiful women present many were English, so many that I felt a thrill of pleasure and pride as I gazed at them. *Blonde* and *brune* they all looked most lovely in their becoming costumes.

When I first entered the ball-rooms the Empress was not present, neither was the Emperor. But a few moments after I noticed a blue domino, whose stately tread I at once recognised. I became confirmed in my discovery upon approaching the domino. He was laughing and talking with and at a fair little *bergère* that was teasing him, and as he turned to answer one of her lively sallies I saw the pointed beard of the Sovereign of the French. I left Napoleon III. talking with the little fair lady, to examine three Princesses.

Their Highnesses Mathilde, Clotilde, and Anna Murat were seated together. The first named wore the costume of a *magicienne*. Her arms were bared to the shoulder, and

bronzed, as was her face. Her head-dress consisted of a long white shawl of fine knitted wool, that was bound to the head with a circlet of Moorish coins, and fell in folds down the back. The Princess's black eyes sparkled but the more from the dark colour of her bronzing, yet I must say that her costume was not becoming. Next the Princess sat the fair Clotilde, looking fairer from the contrast. Her Highness wore a most becoming *bergère* costume of pink and white silk, while a little pink hat was coquettishly set on one side of her head. Her fair light hair was simply but most becomingly *coiffée*, and to add to the grace of her costume, she wore a necklace of roses pinned together with diamonds. I have never seen the Princess Clotilde look so handsome as she did last night. At her side sat the lovely and bewitching Princess Anna Murat. She was also *en bergère*, but her costume was white and blue and her hair was powdered. She looked, as she ever does, most truly handsome.

Having noticed these costumes I was turning away, having, like "Oliver," a desire for more, when I observed a black domino, who was attacking a tall Francis I. I detected in the feigned voice the sweet tones of Eugénie, the giver of this magnificent fête, and her Majesty of the French.

It was now twelve, that witching hour, and as yet I had not noticed the habitués of all Parisian fêtes, the Comtesses de Morny, de Labedoyère, the Princess Metternich, and a number of those ladies entitled by rank and beauty to *briller* at all our most magnificent *réunions*. Just then, I saw from the attitude of those near me, that something was about to occur. The Duke de Tascher was ranging the guests on each side of the apartment, leaving the entrance free and the way clear to the room in which the dancing was going on. A pause occurred, the dancing-room was cleared, and Strauss's

band struck up a lively march. Now came in all those I had missed, and the march changing to a quick quadrille, the ladies, who were dressed as the Elements, commenced a most beautiful and graceful movement, entitled by Strauss, who wrote and arranged all the music of the evening, "Le Quadrille des Quatre Eléments." Sixteen ladies, in appropriate costumes, performed this dance, which they had rehearsed several times before the fète. I give their names, beginning, as in duty bound, with those lent to us by a foreign land to add to our gaieties by their charming presence. They were Princesses, Duchesses, and Countesses—

FOREIGNERS—Metternich, Rozezdziecka, Sneyekowska, Viezabytowska, Ischetwertinska, Rosk, Errazu, Sinelwikoff, Wallembroza, Schowkoska.

OUR OWN — De Morny, Walewski, De Grétry, Persigny, Pourtalès, De Labedoyère.

"Le Quadrille des Eléments" was most rapturously encored by the pleased lookers-on, and after a brief respite the sixteen ladies went again through the mazes of the beautiful dance. I must here state that I missed seeing the first quadrille of the evening, "Les Contes de Fées," led by Mme. Wey-Isabey. After the dancing, I have above named, several polkas and waltzes were played; and it was during the quick and lively *deuxtemps* that the English knights distinguished themselves all, excepting the Knight of the Garter. He, poor fellow, was weak in the knees, and danced with his red silk tights at right angles, more especially while executing his *cavalier seul* in his quadrilles. A lady near me said he was the most polite gentleman in the room, as he was ever in a state of half adoration of his fair *vis-à-vis*. I must mention how exceedingly lovely were the daughters of Lord

Cowley—whom I observed looking, with parental satisfaction displayed in his countenance, at the Lady Sophia Wellesley, as she gracefully turned with her partner in a waltz or polka. She was dressed as night, but was beautiful and bright as day.

Two o'clock had now arrived, and on all sides I heard inquiries as to where the great gallery was. I managed to get as near as possible to a large yellow silk curtain that hung about the middle of the conservatory, as I saw that near it stood the Empress, now dressed in white and wearing a burnous of white striped silk. Near her Majesty, who wore a mask, stood the Duke de Tascher, the nominal giver of the fête, and close by were seated the Princesses Mathilde, Clotilde, and Murat. All at once a clang of trumpets was heard. The yellow curtain was quickly raised, and a fairy-like and most dazzling scene met the gaze. It was an almost endless hall, surrounded with balconies and balustrades covered with vines and flowers, rivalling in magnificence all that we can conjecture of the halls of Italy's famed clime. Myriads of lights abounded. Overhead, splendid chandeliers poured down floods of light on tables that were loaded with a feast almost hidden from our gaze in flowers. At the end of the hall a fountain was splashing its waters in rays of light that rivalled the brightness of the sun. All the senses were pleased at once, for music, sweet and low, was adding to the pleasurable emotion of the guests, who were waited on by pages in feudal dress.

Once the supper over, dancing was resumed with renewed vigour. The third quadrille, "Le Carnaval de Venise," was then danced, and after several waltzes and polkas the cotillon began. This lasted more than an hour, ending in open daylight at six o'clock. It was conducted by



Mdlle. de Tascher de la Pagerie and Count d'Andlau, the secretary of Count de Persigny. I must here tell you that the Countess de Persigny was charmingly dressed as "Earth," one of the four "Elements," and danced most admirably in the principal quadrille.

The Emperor retired at the termination of the cotillon—past six in the morning. Thus ended this most splendid *fête*. Too much praise cannot be attributed to her Majesty and to the Duke de Tascher de la Pagerie, who planned so magnificent an entertainment. It was worthy of an Empress.

In my haste to render you an account of the *fête*, I have no doubt overlooked many most interesting details. Should I recall them to mind I will make them the subject of another letter. You will notice I have made but little mention of the costumes of the gentlemen. They were all excellent, but space would be lacking to describe them, as well as those ladies' costumes that I have been compelled to overlook.

P.S. I had almost omitted to mention a most important matter. Some time since I described the dress that the Empress was to wear. She was to appear as "Diane Chasseresse," but owing to the fact of its becoming known, her Majesty changed her mind and wore only dominos.

LETTER XLVI.

Spring at last—The Emperor and Empress at the Bois—Toilette Reminiscences of the Hotel d'Albe and an Incident at the Fête—Gay Doings in the Faubourg—The Marquise de Gallifet—The Races at Longchamps—Spring Toilettes—A Romance of Fashionable Life.

Paris, Saturday, May 5, 1860.

After three weeks of trials and defeats, the sun has at last contrived to shine in all its glory. Yesterday and to-day shewed the complaining Parisians that the sky of France can still compete in serenity and loveliness with that of its fair sister Italy. "Sunny France" deserved its name to-day; the consequence of this spring-like weather was an immense crowd of gaily-dressed ladies in the Champs Elysées, and gala-day carriages in the Bois de Boulogne. From the Place de la Concorde to the end of the Avenue de l'Impératrice the carriages were so numerous that they were obliged to proceed at a walking pace, and quite crowded in amongst all sorts of vehicles. I observed a modest phaeton with the well-known green and gold livery; there sat the Emperor quietly waiting his turn to drive on faster. Very few persons seemed to recognize him, but he returned graciously the salutations of those who did. How absurd all the stories one sees in English journals of the Emperor's fear of exposing himself among the people; yesterday—and he goes out often driving himself—any one might have reached him with their hands, and thus given the fatal blow which is to rid France of its *Tyrant*, as the English people say and assume; but the French themselves do not share the same opinion, and they

see the prosperity their country is enjoying, and attribute it rightly to the Emperor's desire for the well-being of France. The Empress was also at the Bois, driven in an open carriage and four, *à la d'Aumont*, with another carriage forming suite. Her Majesty was accompanied by one of her ladies of honour, and wore a most becoming toilette, consisting of a *mauve taffetas*, trimmed with one deep flounce at the bottom, and small flounces above it to the waist; the Cashmere shawl, with white ground, which I may call celebrated, as it was made in India especially for the Empress, and bears at the four corners the name "Eugénie," worked in different styles of letters. It is the most expensive shawl ever made in India, having taken numberless months to complete it. A white bonnet accompanied this charming carriage toilet, with *paille* gloves.

It is said the Court is to leave the Tuileries for St. Cloud, but as the trip to Savoy and Nice is to take place sooner than was expected, it is probable that St. Cloud will not be visited till their return. The temporary dancing-hall which was erected at the Hotel d'Albé for the grand fancy-ball is still there; its not being removed has given rise to a rumour that the ball is to be repeated, but this is not very probable. As this ball surpassed in magnificence anything ever known in the Paris world (always excepting the *fête* given by the Duchess of Berri in 1830, which was of unheard-of splendour), it may be not amiss to define some of the toilettes of the ladies present more particularly than I did the day after the ball. One of the most brilliant costumes there was worn by Mdlle. Himptsch. It was a Harlequin (female). The coiffure of this charming dress was a small oval cap, half black and half white velvet, with a long white feather curling forward, fastened with a diamond buckle behind. A large multicoloured

[illegible] should have [illegible] have been a [illegible] and peasants rapidly

taking their flight, like the marvellous guests of Aladdin's enchanted palace flying away at the magician's bidding.

It really seems as if, in regard to balls this year, the desire is increased by being gratified, for never have I known a Paris season to reach so far into the spring. The cold and rainy weather has been partly the cause of this. So numerous have been the balls within the last week, that I cannot undertake to mention even the names of the givers; but I can speak of one which may possess interest. It is well known that many of the old families of the Faubourg St. Germain have for some time renounced all idea of balls, *fêtes*, &c. Being disappointed in their political desires, they have resolved on showing their anger by making themselves as miserable as possible. This extremely wise proceeding not having produced the slightest effect on the person or persons for whom it was intended, its projectors have, perhaps, at last come to the conclusion that they may as well amuse themselves, for their *bouderie* is paid not attention to. The Count and Countess D——l gave a ball last Friday night. It was brilliantly attended. The Count was Minister of Finance under Louis Philippe. The *salons* of the Count D——l have not been opened for a *réunion* for several years. It is said that many others will follow the Count's example—if not this year, early next season. A grand ball was given last night by the Marquise de Brabentane. This lady is daughter of the celebrated Marquise de Gallifet, of whom is told the following story. The family had been for many years resident at St. Domingo, where they became one of the most eminent families of the colony. The Marquise was a woman of extraordinary beauty, and she joined to that an extraordinary wit and originality, which rendered her charming to all who saw her; in fact, soon after her return to France, the Marquise de Gallifet

was but another name for grace, wit, and beauty. Marie Antoinette heard this, and signified to some one that she would not object to seeing the Marquise. This was communicated to M. de Gallifet, who, justly proud of his birth, his fortune, and, above all, of the beauty of his wife, declared that she should never appear at Court till she had been solicited to do so by the Queen herself! Marie Antoinette laughed at this, and declared, mockingly, that it was an *original* idea; but female curiosity leads female hearts to great lengths—nothing was talked of in the *monde* but the *gavottes* so beautifully danced by the beautiful Marquise. The Queen's curiosity was aroused to an extraordinary pitch, and at the next grand ball given at Versailles the Marquis and Marquise were invited according to all the rules of etiquette. This was a splendid triumph for Madame de Gallifet. A short time after they made the acquisition of a splendid hotel, and gave magnificent *fêtes*, which were attended not only by the flower of the French nobility, but by the King himself, and with him the gentle, the wronged, the innocent Marie Antoinette.

Last Sunday the Bois de Boulogne was more than ordinarily crowded; the cause of this increase of carriages was easily ascertained—there were races at Longchamps. The day was glorious; the rays of the sun, so long a truant, were most grateful, and cast a genial light on the faces of the crowd. The programme of the races offered many attractions, and, take it all in all, with the single exception of the visit of the Grand Duke Constantine last year to this race course, I think I have never seen in France so numerous and so *choisi* a gathering. Not a fine name in France but was there represented by some bearer of it. Among others the Princesses de Metternich, de Léon, and Czartoriska, Comtesse de Greffulke, de la



Rochefoucauld, and de Morny; Duchesses d'Istrie and de Sagau; the Baroness de Rothschild, &c. The *toilettes* were most brilliant, and were for the most part composed of dresses of taffetas of light colours, many with and many without flounces, but none with double jupe. I observed some of our *élégantes* in striped dresses, one white stripe, and one of colour, with one large flounce at the bottom of the predominating colour in the silk. It has become quite a rage this year to convert the fine cachmere shawls into a sort of burnos or cloak, with hanging hood. I cannot say I admire this. The Indian cachmere has a *cachet* of its own, and should be allowed to retain its original character; to change its form takes away from its value. Many of the bonnets had wreaths of flowers entirely around the face, to replace the *tours de tête*, or cap. This is very well as a novelty, but the *tulle* and blonde lace of the cap give a delicacy to the complexion that the decided colours of all flowers cannot equal. The Emperor and Empress arrived in time to see the principal race of the day, and, as may be well imagined, their presence gave additional *éclat* to the proceedings.

Between the races an attentive observer might have remarked that some very interesting subject was being discussed. The fair countenances of the ladies seemed overcast. It seems that some person had just brought the news that the beautiful and accomplished daughter of the Marquis de la R—— had entered a convent. The reason was the old tale love, and an inexorable father. The object of the young lady's affection was a gentleman of good birth and fortune, but no title. The patrician blood of the Marquis would not allow him to consent to the union. I saw the parties dancing together this winter at the Tuileries. How little either of them imagined that their happiness was so soon to cease!

The young lady is making hurried preparations for taking the fatal vows which will for ever separate her from the unfeeling world. What a sad fate for one so young! In her solitary and self-imposed confinement, that sad young heart may exclaim with Juliet—

> "Alas! that love, so gentle in his view,
> Should be so tyrannous and rough in proof."

LETTER XLVII.

Catholic Observances—The Fancy Fair at the British Embassy—The Prince Impérial and the Enfans de Troupe—The Concerts Musard—Ristori in a New Rôle—The Fashions—The Golden Belt, a Romance of Fashionable Life.

Paris, Monday, May 14, 1860.

The month of May is one especially devoted by the followers of the Catholic faith to the adoration of the Virgin Mary, and this accounts for the number of young girls dressed in white (the emblem of purity), with orange-blossoms on their heads, that one meets daily in the streets on their way to the various churches. The rainy and unpleasant weather is very unfavourable to them, and makes their white dresses and long veils look dreadfully crushed and fallen. It also keeps the children at home who are wont at this season of the year to erect little chapels at the corners of the principal streets, and solicit passers-by to give them a sou for its preservation and enlargement. I call them "chapels" because the children dignify them by that name; they are seldom anything more, however, than a small bit of candle stuck on an old broken plate. The architectural finish of these chapels

is supposed to have reached perfection when a threelegged stool, covered with a white cloth, can be obtained, on which to place the candle and plate. A plaster statue of the Virgin is a degree of ornamentation never indulged in, though sometimes a benevolent passenger is moved to an unusual degree of generosity by the desire manifested by the children to buy one; but, alas for the selfishness of human nature the money given to buy a statue is usually spent in *bonbons*, or in the purchase of those wafer-like cakes called *plaisirs*, which all my little friends who have been to Paris remember with such delight.

The fancy fair, which took place on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday of this week at the English Embassy, for the benefit of the British Charitable Institution, was extremely well attended, although the weather on the first day was so very inclement that the attendance was not large; Wednesday and Thursday, however, made up for the first day, and a considerable sum must have been collected. The names of the lady patronesses comprised some of the first of the French and foreign *noblesse* now in Paris—among others, the Princess Metternich, the Countess de Morny, Countess Walewski, Lady Rokeby, Mrs. Swale, Lady Oliffe, Miss Keir Grant, Vicountesse de Brezé, Mrs. Gage. The Countess Cowley had a stall upon which were exhibited many articles of English manufacture, such as hats, Balmoral petticoats, china, &c. Her ladyship proved an excellent saleswoman, as her stall was soon empty; the hats were most beautiful, and quite a novelty in Paris. The Princess Metternich was a valuable auxiliary. She had some little portemonnaies in a box, which she entreated each passer-by to purchase; her manner was so charming that her porte-monnaies were soon all sold, and then the Princess sold bouquets. I cannot say that the flowers were beautiful, or

that the price was very moderate, but she soon managed to dispose of them. The Princess is tall and exceedingly graceful; her face is not pretty, but her large dark eyes are full of fire; her manners are charming, with a simplicity and a *laisser aller* which in one occupying her position is very attractive. Each lady patroness had several young lady assistants, and the display of pretty faces was enough to rejoice one's heart. But the bright particular star, the "observed of all observers," was the eldest daughter of Lord Cowley, Lady Sophia Wellesley. Her young ladyship was selling cakes, chocolate, and other refreshments, and I sadly fear that many a digestion was trifled with ruthlessly for the sake of standing before her stall a little longer. One young gentleman, who, to my certain knowledge, had eaten sixteen buns, five cakes, and a large tart, after a desperate effort, resolved to take something more; Lady Sophia, perhaps unaccustomed to such ferocious appetites, and seemingly quite unaware of the secret intent of the gentleman, looked at him with rather an astonished air. That formidable look made the young gentleman swallow his seventeenth bun the wrong way; feeling a sense of his own position, and the knowledge that he would soon be slapped on the back by some sympathising friend to make the bun take its natural course, he liquidated his large account, and walked slowly and sorrowfully away. I was not surprised at his wishing to look at her; with my sex's privilege, I gazed at her to my heart's content. If anything can surpass the beauty of her face, it is the air of distinction which characterises this young lady, as well as her sister. A military band "discoursed most excellent music" in the garden, and the fair might have been continued for a week longer as far as regards attendance and success.

An interesting event took place the day before yesterday. The Prince Imperial having manifested a desire to see the *enfans de troupe* of his regiment, his wish was complied with —in fact, all the *enfans de troupe* now in Paris, numbering about 150, were brought to the Tuileries. The young Prince joined them, and they filed off before their Majesties. They then entered the Palace, headed by the Prince Impérial, and passed into one of the long galleries, in which was served a most delectable repast; his little highness took his seat at their head, and seemed to enjoy himself in the highest possible degree. The Prince, after the cloth was removed, gravely proposed the toasts of "The Army," and "The *enfans de troupe*," which were of course drunk with great enthusiasm by his little guests. The Emperor and Empress passed through the hall, and her Majesty kissed and patted the heads of several of the pretty little fellows. The saddest moment of all was after the festivity, when the children were obliged to leave. The Prince objected to this most energetically, and it was only on the promise that they should come soon again that he allowed them to depart. His Highness is a bright intelligent boy, and, although but little over four years of age, speaks several languages fluently.

The weather has so suddenly become hot that the theatres are almost deserted (at least by the upper classes), outdoor amusements being more agreeable. The "Concerts Musard," behind the Palace de l'Industrie, opened on the 1st of May, and have been extremely well attended; in fact, I know of no pleasanter place to pass away an evening. In the midst of fragrant flowers and dashing fountains, the sweet melody of this admirably-organised band rises and falls in gentle cadence. Musard has written some beautiful *morceaux* this winter, which will soon, no doubt, become popular, like

everything emanating from this favourite composer. The price of admission is extremely low—only a franc, but Musard has laid down, and adhered to, a rule which is most commendable, that of refusing admission to all improper persons; the consequence is, that the company is really select. I observed last night, among others, Lord Cowley and his two daughters, Prince and Princess Metternich, and Auber the composer. The Tamberlik Galop, executed for the first time, was received with much applause.

Madame Ristori is playing Queen Elizabeth at the Italiens. It is the first time she has been seen in this *rôle* in Paris, and she has created quite a furore in it. It is unfortunate for this really great *tragédienne* that the only *salle* suitable to her in Paris (the Italian Opera-house) should be occupied until so late in the season. Many of our fashionables are already gone to the country, and those who are here do not like the idea of passing three or four hours in the theatre at this season.

The hot weather has wrought a rapid change in the fashions. All dark colours have been discarded suddenly, and lighter ones have taken their place. Barège dresses, with one deep flounce of the same material, and several small ones of silk of a contrasting colour, are very pretty. I saw a grey one, withs mall blue flowers, there was a deep flounce of the barège, and four small blue silk ones above it. Bonnets are made much larger this year than last; and it certainly seems as if the dreadful poke bonnet of our grandmothers was hanging menacingly over our heads—better over them than on them you will say, but so it is. The *casaque*, so much worn during the last three years, still keeps its sway over our *élégantes*. Some very pretty ones are made of black silk with white silk cording at all the seams, and a stitching of white silk, done by the sewing machine, round the bottom. Others are all plain black

silk, and have a sort of small pélerine of guipure or Chantilly lace thrown over the shoulders. Many ladies have them made the same colour as the dress. I saw a beautiful pearl-grey silk, trimmed with a wide band of violet taffetas round the bottom of the skirt, with the *casaque* or long *basque* of the same silk, and trimmed in the same manner; this was, of course, extremely elegant, and could be worn only for carriage and visiting dress. Another pretty outside covering is the muslin shawl, which came ont last summer; they are made of white muslin, generally embroidered, and are extremely cool and pretty for the very hot weather. As the spring advances the closed dress sleeve retires, and in its place we have the old shapes, but all flowing. The tight silk sleeve with the cuff was very pretty for the winter, but the other is more agreeable for hot weather. I see that the little *postillon*, or tail to the bodies of dresses, is being made to silk dresses again this year, probably to relieve the monotony of the *corsage à ceinture*. Pointed bodies have gone out totally and entirely. A most beautiful present for a good kind papa or husband to make just now is a gold band—real gold—the links very small, indeed, like the bracelets worn some years ago. I cannot say they are much worn here, because their price prevents their being generally used; but many of our fashionable ladies, at the head of whom I can name her Majesty, have shown especial favour for this beautiful ornament. A little anecdote, in which one of these belts is mentioned, was told last week; I cannot vouch for its truth, but I am acquainted with the parties. Mdlle ——, a young lady of no personal attractions, but of great moral excellence, and possessing a very large fortune (something like twenty thousand pounds a year), had, like most young ladies in her position, several suitors for her hand. Her father gave a ball about a month

ago, to which all the gentlemen were invited. Passing behind a group of bushes which had been placed in the ball room to decorate it, the young lady saw two of her admirers engaged in low, and, on one side, angry dialogue. Her own name was mentioned—do not blame her if she did not appear immediately; she was anxious to hear their conversation. The first speaker was the one towards whom her heart yearned; in fact she had almost pronounced the decisive "Yes:" the other an officer of high rank, but without fortune, and known to be deeply in debt. The first spoke of his *future* with certainty; regretted her ugliness, and added that he only married her for her money. He also said he considered he was conferring a favour upon her. The officer took it up, saying that if the young lady had in reality consented, he was unworthy of the distinction: that love invested its object with beauty; that he (for he loved her) thought her most beautiful—and even if she were not, her other qualities were such at entitled her to esteem and admiration. The next day the officer received the golden belt worn by the lady the evening before, instituting him her champion in the eyes of all the world. Their banns were published yesterday.

LETTER XLVIII.

The Weather—Spring Fashions—Imperial Movements—Marriage of the Prince de Polignac—The Imperial Stables—The Conciergerie—Souvenirs of Marie Antoinette.

Paris, Friday, June 8, 1860.

"WILL the pleasant weather never come?" is the question that everyone is asking his neighbour. The oldest inhabitant (that individual who, Dickens says, makes it a point

never to know anything) certainly cannot remember such a spring as this—so cold, so gusty, and wet. In Paris one expects fine weather at a certain date; in fact, the 15th of May is supposed to be the time when carpets are removed and parqueted floors waxed, heavy window curtains taken down, and Venetian blinds or muslin curtains to replace them. According, therefore, to ancient custom, these little preparations for overpowering heat were made at the appointed date by all the good housewives of Paris, and it is now their discomfort to find that the expected heat does not come, and their houses, instead of looking deliciously cool and airy, appear cold, desolate, and uncomfortable. Which of those very inconsiderate celestial bodies is causing all this confusion? The *fêtes champêtres* that have been put off, the summer dresses which have been consigned to the silent chest of drawers, are innumerable. The only consolation is that we have companions in misery—that in England, and even in the United States, the weather has also been inclement and unseasonable.

Our fashionable dressmakers have all sorts of novelties, if the weather would only permit us to wear them. Little Zouaves in light cashmere, trimmed with gold and silver braid; others are made of white muslin, trimmed with straw. This is a great novelty. I have seen a black silk paletôt trimmed on the sleeves and skirt with rows of straw. It is peculiar, but I cannot say it has a pretty effect; it is also inconvenient, as the slightest movement of the wearer breaks the straw. It looks better on barège than on silk. I saw a blue barège of a very delicate shade, which was embroidered down the front and around the bottom of the skirt with little stars of straw. This was pretty. But where the straw really shows to advantage is in the trimming of bonnets. A very

elegant one is made from fine Devonshire straw, with a coloured curtain of taffetas (mauve or light blue, for example), with a thick straw cord twisted twice round the bonnet, and made in a knot on one side with two tassels of straw; strings to match the curtain, and the same straw cord underneath, across the top of the bonnet. There has been an effort made to do away with the blonde cap inside bonnets, and to replace it with flowers, but this is not so pretty; there is a peculiar softness about the blonde which is becoming to everyone. The mixture of black velvet with white flowers for bonnets is still very much used; it is simple and very elegant. In the way of cloaks we have nothing that can compete with the long black silk casaque; the paletôt of black silk is no longer considered *bon genre.* For elderly ladies the black embroidered cashmere shawl, with lace, is very pretty; and for some ladies, who think themselves not young enough for the casaque, but who still want something more gay than the black cashmere shawl, the same shawl has been made in white cashmere, trimmed also with black lace; this, which in the days of our grandmothers would have been considered an absurd *melange* of colours, is now accepted as very *distingué.* I saw a white muslin dress with innumerable flounces, each flounce trimmed with black lace. Piqué dresses, with the long casaque of the same material, are trimmed with black velvet; this of course involves a constant trimming and undoing each time the dress is washed, but the velvet has a pretty and novel effect.

The Imperial standard is no longer floating over the Tuileries. Their Majesties and the Prince Impérial have gone to Fontainebleau; four series of guests have been invited, and there will be several hunts. One misses the smiling face of the Empress in the shady alleys of the Bois de

Boulogne, and the beautiful equipage of the Prince Impérial, with his martial-looking *garde du corps.*

A few days since took place the marriage of the Prince de Polignac with Mdlle. Mirès, daughter of the wealthy capitalist. It is said that a sincere attachment had sprung up between the young couple (an extraordinary fact in these sordid times), and that she married him for himself and not his title, and he married her for herself and not her father's coffers. In these sensible, matter-of-fact, steam-engine days, one hears less of *mésalliance* than formerly, when *croquant* could not wed *noble.*

A very agreeable hour-and-a-half may now be spent in a visit to the Emperor's new stables in the Louvre. Great facility is afforded to strangers to enter, and every day one may meet people from every quarter of the globe (but particularly from England) examining with interest and attention these magnificent stables. The entrance is by one of the fine gates of the Louvre, facing the Seine, and after having signed our names in the visitors' book we enter the Cour Caulaincourt. In the centre of this court is a large spiral staircase of extreme beauty, ornamented on each side by gigantic bronze groups representing a dog and a boar, whose open jaws eject streams of water which fall into marble basins below. This staircase conducts to a riding-school now in course of construction, and consequently not open to visitors. In the first stable to the left in the courtyard are kept the saddle-horses for the Emperors's *suite.* They are very numerous and very fine, but we hasten on them to those kept for the special use of his Majesty. This stable is of great beauty; it is paved with stone, very nicely carved, the Imperial eagle being at the threshold. The horses, about fifteen in number, are splendid animals, and

have the most cosy stalls one can imagine; each horse has his name written up over his head, and this is surmounted by a crowned eagle carved in oak; we particularly observed one splendid creature, and afterwards learned that he was the Emperor's favourite saddle-horse; his name, as written over his head, was Cuningham. One of our party said the horse had fallen in his esteem because his name was not spelt properly, and that he thought it was an injustice to the animal to rob him of his second "n;" somebody, of course, brought in the hackneyed quotation of the rose by any other name smelling as sweet, the applicability of which, however, in the present case, being disputed by our erudite friend, who said that roses might not be particular in that respect, but horses were. But the servant who was showing us the stables now led the way into different carriage-houses, and at last into that in which is kept the *voiture de gala*. This magnificent carriage, which was used at the christening of the Prince Imperial, is one mass of red velvet and gilding; from the centre of the top rises a gigantic crowned eagle, whose gilded outspread wings almost touch either side of the carriage, so great is their width. But although of great beauty, this gala carriage does not compare with the one used at the marriage of the Emperor and Empress, which is kept at Versailles. The attention of the visitor is immediately attracted to the charming little carriage presented by the Emperor's coachmaker to the Prince Impérial. The paintings on the panels are *chefs-d'œuvre;* and inside, the soft white satin cushions—the gold embroidered "N"—everything, in fact, call forth admiration. The Prince is very fond of the carriage, it is said, but it is never used except at Saint Cloud, where his little Highness is driven about in it, drawn by two little black ponies. There

are a number of other rooms to see, in which are kept saddles, harness, and all other appurtenances; but these I need not describe. English visitors to Paris should make it a point to visit the Emperor's stables. Cards for admission may be had on applying (by letter) to General Fleury, at the Palace of the Louvre.

Another interesting visit may be paid to a place of a far different character. I refer to the Conciergerie, the prison of the unhappy, the wronged Marie Antoinette. In entering the sad and lonely cell, occupied during sixty-seven days by this virtuous Queen, how the mind reverts to the time when she was flattered, courted, petted, adored; and how in a few months she descended from the throne of France to this miserable cell, and only left it to meet an untimely and inhuman end. The cell is about eleven feet long and seven wide; an obscure light streams in from a small window, its rays falling upon the crucifix, which was the property of Marie Antoinette. The gaoler showed us a small hole cut in the wall, through which her every movement was watched. A chair and an iron bedstead were the only pieces of furniture in the room. There are two pictures in the cell, which were painted and placed there by order of the first Emperor. One represents Marie Antoinette at the moment she is told that she is to leave her royal home for a prison; and the other represents her receiving the consolations of religion, in this same cell, just before leaving it and the world for ever! Both are accounted good likenesses, and possess a painful interest in the scenes they represent. The adjoining cell was Robespierre's place of confinement after the fall of the Revolutionary party. It is a more spacious and more comfortable-looking place than the one occupied by the royal captive. To the right of Robespierre's cell is the celebrated

"Salle d'Attente," where the unhappy and noble victims of the Revolutionists assembled to hear their doom pronounced. Alas! the fatal cart which conveyed them to the scaffold, amidst the hootings of the bloodthirsty populace, stood waiting at the door, and their implacable judges, in answer to their pleadings, but pointed to the vehicle which was to hurry them on to death. It is this *Salle*, represented in the magnificent painting of "A Scene at the Conciergerie, 1793," by Gerôme, which attracts so much attention and admiration at the Luxembourg. The Conciergerie is now under repair, and therefore there are no prisoners within its gloomy precincts; but in a few months the heavy barred gates as they swing on their creaking hinges will cause many a sad heart to sigh for liberty. The famous "salle" has been converted into a chapel, where the prisoners will assemble to hear mass every Sunday. This is rather a melancholy subject to finish my letter with, but next week I shall *dédommager* my readers by giving them an account of the gaieties at Fontainebleau.

LETTER XLIX.

The Weather—The Fête of the Annexation—The Review—The Illuminations—A Novel Use for Diamonds—Imperial Largesse.

Paris, Thursday, June 14, 1860.

PARIS, always so gay and bright, was doubly beautiful today; the sun shone brilliantly forth, making the green trees in the Tuileries and the Champs Elysées, assume a richer tint, while its rays falling through the waters of the beautiful fountains of the Place de la Concorde, made them

sparkle and glow with a thousand changing hues. It was the Fête of the Annexation of Savoy and Nice, and by a singular coincidence, the anniversary of the battles of Marengo and Friedland. It was also this day one year ago, that the Zouaves and Grenadiers of the Guard marched forward from Milan to achieve the glorious victory of Solferino; there seemed triple reason for celebrating these three victories—two of them gained by force of arms, and the third by the better and wiser means of justice and diplomacy.

No wonder, then, that the ouvrier laid aside his blouse and put on his *habit de gala*. No wonder that the grisette's snow white cap was trimmed with bright ribbons, and that the plain, well-worn cotton gown is replaced by one of brighter hue; it is a national holiday; and from nine o'clock in the morning till perhaps past eleven at night, these good people will be in the streets, admiring everything they see, laughing at everything they hear—happy, light-hearted, and *insouciant*. The town was beautifully decorated with flags; in many places the Sardinian colours floated with the tricolour, and at Meurice's Hotel the English Union Jack and the American Stars and Stripes mingled their rich and heavy hues with the less intricate French and Sardinian standards. All the morning one met little bodies of the Garde Nationale going at a quick pace somewhere, one knew not whither; but about one o'clock they re-united on the Champs de Mars, where they were to be reviewed by the Emperor.

His Majesty, accompanied by the Empress, had arrived from Fontainebleau at one o'clock, and at half-past one left the Tuileries for the Champs de Mars. The Emperor wore a general's uniform, without any other decoration than that

of the Legion of Honour. The Imperial *cortège* consisted first of a detachment of the Cent-Gardes, after them rode the officers of ordonnance and aides-de-camp, then his Majesty himself, immediately followed by the Prince Napoleon, Marshal Randon, and the Duke de Malakoff. The carriages of the Empress, driven *à la d'Aumont*, followed the Emperor's *cortège*. Her Majesty occupied the first one, and was accompanied by the Grand Duchess Marie of Russia and her two sons. The Prince Impérial did not accompany his parents; the appearance of the Imperial family was the signal for long and loud shouts of "Vive l'Empereur!" "Vive la Dynastie Napoléonienne!" Nothing could at this moment exceed the view from the terrace of the Tuileries; to the left was the magnificent old château, the home of so many kings, with the long line of massive foliage from its gate to the Place de la Concorde, the place itself as the *cortège* passes, with the brazen helmets and cuirasses of the Cent-Gardes glittering in the sun, and far, far in the distance Napoleon's sculptured life, the Arc de Triomphe. The people, many of whom had been at their posts from an early hour in the morning, after watching the cavalcade slowly disappear amidst the trees of the Champs Elysées, now left their strongholds to make a rush for the bridges which were already crowded; in fact, for miles on every side of the Champ de Mars, the living human mass had been dense for hours. The Emperor, after having crossed the plain, commenced the review of the Garde Nationale, each column greeted his Majesty with most deafening *vivats*.

On the balcony on the first story of the Ecole Militaire was placed a sort of tent made of crimson velvet—under this her Majesty aud the Grand Duchess, accompanied by their

respective suites, took seats—all the windows were occupied by ladies in *grande toilette.* The defile lasted an hour and a half, the Garde Nationale filed off first—the enthusiasm of this body was so great that in passing before his Majesty, they carried their shakos on the end of their muskets, and made the air ring with their shouts. The sun, whose rays were tempered by a gentle western breeze, shone gloriously till the end of the review. Their Majesties, returning from the Champ de Mars, stopped at the Palais de l'Industrie, to see the Agricultural Exhibition, which will be open to the public next Saturday. The Cent-Gardes were dismissed at the door of the exhibition, and his Majesty returned to the Tuileries in one of the Empress's carriages.

It was a general remark that the beauty of the scene was enhanced by the variety of costumes to be seen among the assembled multitude. The reason was that numbers of strangers from all countries had come to Paris for this *fête,* as well as innumerable crowds from the French provinces. These wore their national costume, which in many cases is very picturesque. I observed a little band of Savoyards, with their knee-breeches and deep red stockings, wearing the tricolour ribbons twined about their slouched hats. It was very amusing to see them at regular intervals, stop and shout lustily, "Vive la France"—La France now comprehended their own romantic land with its gentle hills and luxuriant valleys.

The Empress left Paris for Fontainebleau by the train. Strolling about to see the illuminations we saw her Majesty, who, being only attended by two ladies of honour, in a carriage of a very simple description, was hardly recognised by the people, who were shouting for her long life and health. The illuminations were on a much more extensive scale than

was expected, the Palace of the Elysée being a perfect blaze of light. All the Ministries of the Crown were illuminated, as well as the Tour St. Jacques, the Arc de Triomphe, the Corps Législatif, &c.; but I observed that the foreign Ministries had no attempt at illuminations. The Rue Rivoli was very striking, as from its commencement at the Place de la Concorde, to quite the end, a long straight row of gaslight was burning, the effect was very chaste and pretty. The crowd that had assembled near the Seine, at about eight o'clock in the evening, had the gratification of seeing his Majesty walking in the reserved terrace of the Tuileries, attended by the Chef du Cabinet, Monsieur Mocquard, and by General Fleury.

His Majesty was immediately recognised by the crowd, and received with loud acclamations. For the benefit of my fair readers, and perhaps for my own satisfaction, I tried to see exactly the Empress's *toilette*, but I am obliged to confess that as she passed in her carriage I saw nothing but her face, which was encircled by a wreath of delicate *mauve* flowers; at the review I was even less fortunate, for being above her Majesty, I could only gaze down upon her parasol, the end of which was set with diamonds and other precious stones.

In the evening *cantatas* were sung at several of the theatres. I have no doubt they were very fine, as a gold medal was accorded for one of them; but I confess I did not brave the crowd to hear them. The crowd in the streets at midnight was as great, if not greater, than at ten o'clock, as about that hour the theatres began to disgorge. All was laughter, joking, and merriment up to the last moment. The Emperor and Empress have given a large sum from their private purses for the poor, and I do not doubt these

people will long remember the generosity of their Majesties on the occasion of the annexation of Savoy and Nice. *A la semaine prochaine ma lettre de Fontainebleau.*

LETTER L.

The Weather—The Road to Fontainbleau—Early Habits of the Emperor—The Prince Impérial—The Interior of the Chateau—The Pope's Old Quarters—The Imperial Cabinet de Travail—An Odd Fish—The Stables and Kennel.

Fontainbleau, Thursday, June 21, 1860.

THE reports of unpropitious weather here, and the unusual dulness of the Imperial circle at the château, caused by the serious illness of Prince Jérome, did not prevent my leaving Paris the day before yesterday in order to fulfil my promise of last week. The ride from Paris to Fontainebleau is certainly one of the most beautiful for its length that can be imagined. On each side of the road may be seen fine villa residences, almost hidden by massive verdure, and the next moment, as the iron horse whirls swiftly along, luxurious and extensive plains, stretching far away to the right or left, meet the eye. The town and château of Fontainebleau are about fifteen minutes' drive from the railway station. Have you that indispensable article, a friend at Court? I am so fortunate as to have one, and through his kindness the short distance I have just mentioned was surmounted in a fine brougham, comfortably and richly cushioned, and having upon its dark green panels the cypher "N," underneath an Imperial crown. In other words I was accommodated with a seat in one of the Court carriages, and was soon rattled up to the château.

The weather was anything but pleasant; it was not raining, but dark grey clouds covered the sky, and loud were the threats on the part of the said weather that it would soon behave as badly as possible. It was nine in the morning when we reached the château, and but few of the guests of their Majesties were as yet visible.

Walking in the Jardin Anglais, we met the Emperor. His Majesty wore a dark blue frock-coat buttoned to the chin, and was quite alone. He had been walking ever since seven, and was, when we met him, returning to the château. His Majesty, I am told, reads early each morning the papers that come by the morning mails, and by the time his *invités* are stirring, he has acquainted himself with the events of the day. It is to them a wonder how he can be so well *au fait* with the political news. They are not, perhaps, aware how matutinal he is.

We promenaded in the magnificent parterres for some time, where, about ten o'clock, we saw the Prince Impérial with Miss Shaw, his English governess, and one of his ladies in waiting. He is in excellent health and in great spirits, as was evinced by the peals of laughter he uttered as several gentlemen who met him chased him through the alleys. When near us, his little cheeks were rosy with the exercise, and his bright blue eyes were dancing with glee. He is a pretty child, and while being the image of his mother, the gentle Eugénie, he still resembles the Emperor, more especially when grave. Later in the day we met the Prince again, but I will revert to that further along. By this time, many ladies and gentlemen, the guests for this week, were promenading in the parterre of the Jardin Anglais, or in the deeply shaded alleys that conduct to the forest. We were awaiting the escort of our kind friend at Court, who was to enable us

to visit the château, and soon he joined us. It was now twelve o'clock, and at that hour their Majesties and their guests breakfast. This gave us an opportunity of visiting the château in detail, and you may rest assured that we did not fail to avail ourselves of the opportunity.

During the last year or two the Emperor has caused the entire renovation, or rather restoration, of the outside of the chateau, while inside it has resumed all its former magnificence and splendour. Fine paintings fill the panels that were as yet untenanted, and on all sides the richest gildings abound. I was particularly struck with the grandeur of the salons, and especially the Throne-room. Each of these, and, I may say, every room in the palace, has its legend of King or Queen, and is doubly interesting from these historical reminiscences. The dining saloon is magnificent; marble columns support the splendidly frescoed ceiling, glittering lustres and chandeliers abound on all sides, while marble and bronze statues fill each nook and corner. This room is very large, two hundred persons dine there daily during the stay of their Majesties in Fontainebleau. I must not forget to state that throughout the entire palace, paintings by the first masters, and of immense value, are in great profusion. The glory of the place, in my estimation, is the gallery of Diana, La Galerie de Diane. This is a long, beautifully-decorated room, from which one issues into drawing-rooms hung and carpeted with the richest Gobelins tapestry, and filled with inlaid furniture of the most gorgeous description. The Salle de Spectacle is most convenient, and richly decorated. It is hung in blue silk and gold. At the back of the rows of arm-chairs, used by the spectators, are two saloons; one is used by the Empress, and the other by his Majesty. The guests most in favour while away the entr'actes in these saloons

on the evenings that their Majesties order theatrical representations. I must state, to give you an idea of the size of the palace, that eighteen hundred beds are ready for use at all times.

The usher who took us over the château, and explained what we were seeing, was particularly facetious while shewing us *les appartemens du Pape.* He smiled significantly while speaking of St. Peter's successor, and even indulged in the query as to whether Pius IX. would not like such snug quarters, were the terrible Garibaldi to get too close to Rome. Your readers will no doubt remember that it was here Napoleon I. brought the Pope when he had rather unceremoniously taken possession of him.

Before leaving the château to examine the kennels, stables, and gardens, we were shewn the room where the Emperor meets his Ministers in council, the room that serves as his *cabinet de travail,* and the room wherein he walks on rainy days—a room much frequented, lately, I fear. We noticed that in his Majesty's study, maps and plans abounded on all sides, while numbers of formidable volumes, with marks in them, proved that the Emperor, in spite of his many occupations, finds time for study. We were shewn several rooms containing billiard and bagatelle tables, as well as other games, for the amusement of the guests in rainy weather.

Leaving the château *à regret*—for we had not as yet familiarised ourselves with one-tenth of the curiosities it contains, or heard half its quaint legends of gallant kings and fair dames—we filled our pockets with bread and went to see the famous carp in the grand basin. I fed these aged fellows with bread crumbs, and had the satisfaction of seeing some great ugly fish with excresences on their heads denoting their age, as I was assured by our guide. I was told that one of



the carp has a ring in its nose, placed there by Diane de Poitiers, but although I looked intensely for this one, I failed to get even a glimpse of a gold nose-ring. I rather think the whole affair is one more of the Fontainebleau legends. In the midst of the basin is the famous Council Chamber of Napoleon the First, constructed by his orders, far out of reach of the ears of prying meddlers. On the basin, which is almost a lake, are a number of row-boats, and here each morning early may be seen his Majesty, indulging in a quarter of an hour's steady and invigorating pull in a boat, which he manages alone, and with great dexterity. In the evening the Empress and the lady guests are rowed about the basin by the boatmen.

Having looked at the carp, we visited the kennels. I cannot say much for the dogs. They have, it appears, some disease at present that prevents their hunting. They are most comfortably housed and taken care of, and have numberless *piqueurs* and huntsmen to look after their comfort. In the stables we saw some 60 or 100 thorough-bred horses, mostly English, and all of them splendid animals. I was also much pleased with the appearance of the Norman carriage or post horses. I am told they are very useful and fast, and that they bear more fatigue than other horses. We also saw the ponies of her Majesty the Empress, and the little horses sent by the King of Sardinia to the Prince Impérial, as well as his fine pony, the gift of our Queen. The Prince drives two of the ponies presented to him by King Victor Emmanuel. He has a small phaeton in which he sits as grave as a judge, holding the reins in good style and keeping his team in a good trot. A small and natty groom is seated behind the Prince, fully equipped, with top boots and livery, and having a most knowing and wide-awake

look. We met the Empress on horseback, accompanied by Mme. la Comtesse de Lourmel and another lady.

Her Majesty's beautiful figure shows to the greatest advantage on horseback; she is an experienced and fearless horsewoman. Although their Majesties are less restrained here than in Paris, they do not enjoy the perfect *laisser aller* which is, for them, the principal charm of Compiègne. The Sovereigns of France could not forget the *exigencies* of courtly etiquette while surrounded, as they are here, by the souvenirs of a long line of kings.

It is observable, however, that her Majesty's morning toilettes are marked by great simplicity, contrasting sometimes strangely with those of the guests, who come prepared to shine, but who mostly adopt plainer apparel when they observe the extreme simplicity of the Empress and her suite. The weather has been so unpropitious that new fashions have been nipped in the bud, and wet and cold have caused summer novelties to be laid aside, and thick shawls and dresses prevail at Fontainebleau as elsewhere.

LETTER LI.

Dieppe and the Weather—Dieppe and its Historical Reminiscences—"Chroniqueuse" at Dieppe notices "Chroniqueur" of Dieppe—The Casino—The Band—Watering-Place Amenities—English Girls at Dieppe and the French Officers, &c.

Dieppe, Tuesday, July 24, 1860.

This favourite sea-bathing town—which, from its proximity to Paris, its fine walks, and the various and manifold amusements it offers to the metropolis-weary traveller, can almost

always count upon retaining him till the rough north-east winds suggest that October is drawing near its close—has not had its usual influx of visitor this year. The well-to-do peasants and fishermen, who at the first intimation of the approach of summer arrange their cottages to the best advantage, and hold themselves in readiness to move, no man knows whither, for the purpose of letting the more comfortable dwelling to some family desirous of passing the summer at Dieppe, and willing to pay more for three months' rent than would purchase the whole house; these poor people, I say, have for the most part been sadly disappointed this year. The weather, cold and wet as it has been in Paris and London, has been doubly dreary and unpropitious by the seaside, and the rolling waves, whose grandeur was wont to call forth all sorts of poetical quotations (rather hackneyed, though appropriate), such as—"Roll on thou deep, dark," &c., "The sea, the sea, the rolling sea"—now incite the few lookers on to bestow other than complimentary expressions as the spray dashes up in their faces, and the strong wind forces them to wrap more tightly about them the large winter shawl, which the unseasonable weather has kept from its summer resting place, the camphor box. It is not therefore extraordinary that the new comer is at first disappointed at the lack of visitors, and fancies his stay this year will be anything but a pleasant one; he is not aware that for historical interest there is, perhaps, not another town in France to exceed this, and that he has only to leave the Casino and the fine villas, which evidently are of recent date, and to visit the old town itself, to find as rich a treasure as any person, reminiscence-mad, would desire.

Tradition tells us that about the year 780, Charlemagne caused to be built a château completely surrounded by high

walls on the present site of Dieppe, although at that time the name given to the place by France's great monarch was Bertheville. Fishermen soon began to build their huts near the château, but it remained a place of no importance until after the second voyage of William the Conqueror to England. The friendly relations which were then established between England and Normandy, caused it to assume an importance doomed to be fatal to it, for in the year 1195 Philip Augustus, fighting against Richard Cœur de Lion, attacked it in the night, sacked it, took prisoners the principal inhabitants, and burnt the vessels. It took more than a century to recover from this blow, and was just beginning to flourish as before, when it passed under the dominion of France with the cession of the rest of Normandy.

This cession, although it answered political ends, was almost as fatal to Dieppe as Philip Augustus' attack. In fact it was not until the place was returned to the English Crown, that it seemed to revive from the lethargy into which so many misfortunes had thrown it. For the second time, however, and in the midst of prosperity, until then unknown, it was wrested from England, by the hardy and determined Louis XI. Under this King and the other Sovereigns, until Louis XIV., it remained a miserable collection of fishermen's huts. During the reign of the latter monarch, *pour comble de malheur*, an English fleet attacked the town, and these few wretched habitations, as well as the old château of Charlemagne, were left a poor heap of smoking ruins. The *splendid* monarch then completely absorbed in the insane idea of making a paradise of Versailles, would have paid little attention to the misfortunes of Dieppe, had he not reflected on its proximity to England, and the evident discontent of the Dieppois when comparing their position under the Crowns of England

and France. Louis gave from his royal purse enough to build up again the principal streets which had been laid waste by the enemy. This was done in the most economical manner, and, for that reason, when Dieppe had risen from her ruins, the wild appearance of the Middle Age—the pigeon roofs, the massive doors, and sculptured casements had disappeared; it was now a clean, regular poor-looking village. In 1820 the town entered a new cycle of existence, which no more resembled the past than the present fishermen's boat resembles the frail, audacious barques that transported to the New World the name, the genius, and the civilisation of France. It was here that the daring navigator Duquesne was born. A statue of him adorns the Place Nationale. Passing through a bye-street yesterday, I observed the following inscription carved in the stone over the door of a very humble dwelling: "*Ci-naquit en l'an* 1702, *et mourût en* 1764. *Michel*—(what, treacherous memory, has the name already flown?)—*chroniqueur, Dieppois.*" All honour to Dieppe! Many a larger and finer town has forgotten more quickly those who wielded the pen for their instruction or amusement. The principal recreation in Dieppe seems to be confined to the Casino. This is a fine building made of iron and glass. The pavilion on the right is a billiard-room; that on the left a reading-room; and the centre pavilion, higher and more profusely decorated than the rest, is crowded every day (in spite of the bad weather) by ladies and gentlemen who come to hear a band, which we are told, in the prospectus of the establishment, executes *de brillantes symphonies.* With *brillantes* I will not cavil, the word may have different meanings; but *symphonie* brings with it such ideas of melody, of *douceur*, that I protest against its being applied to the horrible attempts at the overtures of *Fra*



Diavolo and *Masaniello*, and a "Prayer," composed by the leader (this prayer, by-the-bye, is enough to make one renounce one's religion and country), which form the *répertoire* of the band, to whose diabolical strains we are doomed to listen every day. I say doomed, because one must go there—there is nothing else to do. The weather is not pleasant for excursions; if it were there is a famous château not far off, and there are other places of interest that we could visit. Another diversion of the guests seems to be staring at the new comers. You make your first entrance into the casino, and immediately become the point of interest. Eye-glasses, lorgnons, and sometimes lorgnettes, are directed upon you, and are kept fixed on you with a persistency that causes the blood to mount up to your temples, and the thought to present itself forcibly to your mind that there is a country (and that at only five hours' distance too) where to stare is considered very rude; but by-and-bye you get used to this, and, strange to say, find yourself falling into the same bad habit; in fact, you take a malicious pleasure in making others feel the same annoyance that you have experienced; human nature is so perverse. The Emperor and Empress visited the place in 1853, and the town has been greatly improved since, according to the Emperor's instruction. The Empress interested herself very much in the commendable task of beautifying the town, and a plain, then arid and drear enough, which stretches along the seacoast in front of the mairie (their temporary residence), was traced out into grass-plots, parterres, &c, by her Majesty. But, alas! the grim old ocean is jealous of all mortal delights, and no sooner does the grass spring up than he sends a "killing blast" to make it fade away and die. In the centre of the principal grass-plot there still remain some

flowers growing, strange to say, that seem to thrive on the air which sends their kindred to an early grave. They say that the Empress planted these flowers there herself, and the bronzed old fisherman gives as a reason for their surviving the dangers that surround them, that the sea respects the work of those fair Imperial hands. What a pretty idea! Its poetry represses the smile which its absurdity provokes. In approaching Dieppe by sea one is struck by its resemblance to Dover; a grim old tower now converted into a caserne, standing on a high bluff to the right, brings forcibly to mind Dover Castle, and Albion's white cliffs. But the resemblance is lost when, on touching the shore, we contrast the high stiff white cap, short bright-coloured petticoat, and neat buckled shoes of La Normandie with the non-characteristic, and often not overclean, attire of the women of Dover. Besides the boon of listening to the *brillantes symphonies* of the band of the Casino in the afternoon, we have an occasional *soirée dansante* in the evening. The dancing has not been very general up to the present time, being almost confined to the English girls, who seem wisely to have determined to enjoy themselves at Dieppe. Last Wednesday they indulged in sundry galops and *deux temps* valses, which went off very well in spite of the bad music. As my sex will preserve me from receiving a challenge to fight all the sous-lieutenants in the French army, I may say there are a great number of that highly honourable class here. Everywhere one goes one meets them in crowds; it was a matter of astonishment to me that there were so many officers in a regiment. Somebody has wittily said:—"Des officiers—il en faut, mais pas trop, dieu non." I am sure the person who said that must have lived at Dieppe. There they come with that interminable uniform, blue frock coat and brick-

red trousers. At the ball the delicious strains of a *deux-temps* begin; you see Captain Charles ——, of the Grenadier Guards, hastening across the room, you know he is going to ask "the pleasure," &c., but before he has had time to approach, a horrid, ugly, common, disagreeable (I insist on the invectives) French sous-lieutenant has bawled in your ear, "Mademoiselle, aurai-je l'honneur?" You listen to no more; you know what he means, you look appealingly to mama; she cannot aid you. Captain Charles is standing at your side looking daggers at your tormentor; you dare not refuse, because you are not engaged, and you know besides, that much ill-feeling has arisen in this very town by English girls refusing to dance with the French officers, and so you resign yourself to your fate. It is a worse one than you expected; for, while you start off in the most approved *deux-temps* step, your *danseur* is executing a series of slow-measured gyrations which remind Captain Charles so much of the movements of the wooden figures on an Italian organ that he smiles in spite of himself, although he would die rather than commit a breach of etiquette. You stop, and have an explanation as to the step you *do* dance (and the one he does *not*, par parenthese), and at last succeed in getting your sous-lieutenant off in a sort of *pas acceleré*, which is a capital thing for marching to the assault, but is open for improvement for ball-room purposes. It's done at last; and, to do the poor fellow justice, he seems immensely grateful. He reiterates his thanks, as he bows himself backwards out of your sight, as if you were a little golden-haired queen. Some sage said that every five minutes converse with a human being gave cause for reflection; and as you watch your *danseur's* retreating form, it strikes you that that aristocratic Captain Charles does say,

"Ah, thank you," in a *nonchalant* sort of way, after your *valses* with him. We must not think that this type is the only one of the French officer. We all know that many a boy, whose origin nobody knows, now forces his superiors by birth to make him one of them. He is more than their equal by his valour; but in many regiments (usually not those of the line) we find the living representatives of all those brilliant names that for centuries back have resounded throughout Europe, for whom princesses have left their thrones, and, far from thinking of a *mésalliance,* were but too proud to associate their names and destinies with those who by their valour were sovereigns, and by their birth the finest flowers of *la première noblesse de France.*

LETTER LII.

Doubts about Court Gaieties—Cause of the Empress's Visit to Scotland—Private Theatricals—A Good Story—Success of the New Comedy—The Archives of the Comédie Française —Mario—Deterioration of the French Drama—"The Eatable Bouquet."

Paris, Friday, November 23, 1860.

THE Parisian fashionables are watching with great anxiety the movements of the Empress in Scotland. Will she or will she not attend the grand ball given by the Duke and Duchess of Hamilton? If her Majesty should be present, there is little doubt that the customary festivities of the Court will be kept up this year as usual. But if she declines going, it is likely that, beyond one grand ball after the New Year's

receptions (at which perhaps her Majesty will not appear), there will be very little gaiety at Court this year. The Emperor, it is true, is already beginning to observe less strictly his mourning for his sister-in-law, the Duchess d'Albe. His Majesty honoured the Italian Opera with his presence last Tuesday night. *La Traviata* was given, with Penco as "Violetta."

The departure of the Empress has, of course, given rise to a thousand wild reports. Myriads of stories (all, of course, derogatory to the characters of the Imperial couple) are now afloat. How is it that Mr. Smith and Mrs. Jones know so perfectly everything that the Emperor does and says? Things, that even those worthies say are carried on with the greatest secrecy, are as well known to them as if they themselves were the perpetrators. Why do English people take such a delight in repeating, and I fear augmenting, these scandalous stories? The Empress's departure can be easily and truthfully accounted for. Her Majesty received a great shock in the death of her sister—the more severe because almost entirely unexpected. Perhaps that gentle heart allowed some self-reproach to mingle with her grief; for was she not, at the very moment her only sister was expiring, far away and joining in the brilliant fêtes that the French subjects of the Colonies were only too happy to offer! Alas! one of the penalties of Sovereignty is that the affections of the heart must so often give way to the requirements of the position. The first outburst of grief over, the Empress conceived that she herself was suffering under the very malady which has deprived her so suddenly of her loved sister. Silent and desponding, she became almost hypochondriacal; and for this reason the Emperor begged her to accept the offer of his cousin, the Duchess of Hamilton, as he believed the sojourn



in Scotland and freedom from courtly etiquette would arouse her from her melancholy. It is said that the Empress is displeased with the manner in which the Duchess d'Albe's funeral was conducted. Her Majesty deems that it would have been more consistent with her position if the late Duchess had been buried with the pomp due to the sister of the Empress than with the quiet ceremony used for any ordinary lady of rank. Let us hope that in a few weeks the beautiful Eugénie will return to us with renewed health and strength, which the invigorating air of the Scottish Alps (as the French call the Highlands) so often gives to feeble frames.

Of course, the winter private amusements have not yet begun. The latter part of December will only find our fashionables waking up for action—that is, dancing action. In the meantime *il faut se distraire*, and for that laudable purpose our Faubourg St. Germain belles and beaux are studying hard, and ransacking "many a volume of forgotten lore," to bring out some of those delightfully somniferous French tragedies which are now, thank fate, almost consigned to oblivion even by the Management of the Théâtre Français. The Duchess de la R—— has caused four of her magnificent *salons* to be converted into a theatre, upon the boards of which will appear three aspirants to histrionic fame. Of course the audience will be as aristocratic and select as the actors, and the only difficulty is, where to find people to hiss; for these performances are to be so like the real stage that even the *siffleurs* are not to be excluded. Somebody suggested that the discarded lovers of each lady should hiss her, and the present favoured ones should applaud. This was rejected, as the ladies feared that surprise would be occasioned by the immense number of rejected ones who would find seats, as the once darling *chéris* of their little inconstant hearts. The

dressmakers' rooms are full of Roman and Grecian costumes; the bootmaker has every variety of sandal; and even the artists have a hand in this general theatrical mania.

A good story is told of Madame de C——, noted in Paris for her beautiful figure, who went to a celebrated artist here and desired him to sketch a dress for her to wear in the *Cid*, the first piece to be produced. "I want," said she, "a profusion of drapery, which must fall very much off the shoulders. A long training robe, but still short enough in front to show my feet and ankels, which will be encased in characteristic sandals. Try to show my arm to the best advantage also. But, as I play a character of great modesty, you must manage to attain all this, and still make me appear (as I am) very chary of my charms." "I understand perfectly what you want, Madame," said the witty artist, "quelque chose qui laisse tout voir sans rien montrer." The little distinction, almost without a difference, in the two verbs will be readily appreciated as a cutting reproach to the over vain and not over modest lady.

The new comedy, *La Considération*, at the Français, has met with unqualified success—in fact, it far surpasses expectation. One great drawback is its being in verse. How difficult for the most impassioned actor to throw life and vigour into speeches each line of which has a rhyming termination! It is not often we see this style of writing employed on other boards than those of the Français or the Odéon. Here the aspirant for dramatic honours is also desirous of a seat at the Académie Française and therefore *La Considération*, like other pieces of the same class, is more a literary production than a "telling" comedy. M. Camille Doucet is the author. The well-known actors who, long ere this, have reached the last round in perfection's ladder, really

surpassed themselves in this piece. Delaunay, Régnier, and Bressant carried off the honours at the first representation.

Talking of the Comédie Française, it is announced that the archives of this ancient theatre are about to be published. It is said that from the year 1664 to the present time there have been preserved the most curious documents relative to the origin of the theatre, and of success and failure, even under the management of Molière. For many years also there has been kept a journal or diary, written by the different actors and actresses belonging to the company. Talma, Mlle. Mars, Rachel, Bressant, Régnier, and Provost—all have contributed; and it is affirmed that this diary contains not only a very interesting detail, but the most amusing and curious incidents that have happened to the actors themselves on and off the stage. Added to this there will be given facsimilies of many letters and autographs of celebrated persons, the originals of which are in the hands of the Management. There is little doubt that when this book appears it will be eagerly seized upon by the theatre-going public of Paris.

I announced Mario's *rentrée* at the Italiens in my last letter. Since then, he has appeared in several operas, and each time gives less and less satisfaction. His voice seems not only to have lost its power, but it retains none of that sweetness which in days of yore so charmed his hearers. Gardoni has played the small tenor parts, but even his slender voice is drowned in a cold, and the consequence is that the whole weight of the pieces produced is thrown upon the female performers. To their honour be it said, that Penco vocally, and Alboni both vocally and physically, are quite able to bear it.

At the Gymnase is about to be produced that detestably vulgar piece, *La Dame aux Camélias*, which, having been

played at the Vaudeville till all Paris had seen it, is now to be brought out at a theatre that up to the present time has enjoyed the enviable reputation of eschewing pieces of this stamp. It is really melancholy to see the change which has taken place in the style of pieces produced at the different Parisian theatres within the last few years. French plays were formerly celebrated for their wit and delicate humour. Even at the Palais Royal, although the style was rather more free than English ladies like, the plays brought out were nevertheless full of humour, and had a continuous plot, which kept up the interest to the last. Now how is it? All the new plays are *des pièces à femme.* Some actress, without the slightest claim to the name, as far as talent is concerned, has pieces written for her, in which she shows to the public how many fine dresses, laces, and diamonds she has in her possession, and how many noodles (testified by the crowded state of the *parterre*) she has for admirers. The pieces, on a par with the talent of the actress, present a stupid *mélange* of vulgarity and absurdity, rendered still more vulgar and absurd by the "gagging" constantly carried on among the actors. If this were discountenanced by the public there would soon be a reform; but I regret to say that the rising French generation seem to relish what their grandfathers would not have countenanced, and, therefore, there is little hope of a change.

Paris has long ago carried off the palm from other great cities for the making of bonbons and all sorts of sweetmeats. Spain, which for many years held the supremacy, can now no longer compete with France. Almost every town in the country has a *spécialité* for some sort of *bonbon.* Rouen, for instance, is noted for its delicious *sucre de pomme;* Bourg for its *pralines;* Paris combines her own efforts in this line with those of every other French town, and the struggle for

supremacy now lies between the different confectioners. Boissier and Gouache were for a long time in about the same rank; but those delicious and indescribable *fruits farcis*, brought out last year, placed Boissier far in advance of all competitors. A rival is about to appear in this line, and, if report speaks true, he will prove a formidable one. Certain it is that a shop, situated in the Rue de la Paix, is being fitted up in a style that throws the palaces of the "Arabian Nights" far into the shade. A parterre of growing flowers is to occupy the centre of the shop, while gushing fountains and uncaged birds will at once make the perfumed air cool by their dashing waters, and melodious with the merry chants of the feathered songsters. All sorts of bonbons can of course be procured here; but the *spécialité* of the shop—the *ne plus ultra* of good things—is to be "the eatable bouquet!" This is neither more nor less than a bunch of real flowers covered with crystallized sugar. The coating of sugar is put on while the flowers are still on the bush. The flowers are then allowed to ripen in the sun with the applied sweetness added to their own. The ingenious inventor is reported to have sent a bouquet of violets prepared in this way to the Princess Clotilde. The delicious odour and brilliant tints of the flowers are preserved, and when the fair possessor is tired of gazing upon them, she has still left a feast fit for Hebe. It is said that no bonbon as yet produced can equal in delicacy this floral tit-bit. Roses are prepared in the same manner. The effect on them is peculiarly beautiful, the sugar sparkling like dew after a summer shower.

Who could say there was nothing new under the sun while the Eatable Bouquet remained yet undiscovered?

LETTER LIII.

Anecdote of M. Fould and the Emperor—A Lucky Find and a Curious Bijou—A Blunder well Retrieved—The New Ballet—Hesitation as to the Name—Mlle. Livry and her Preceptors—The Fashion in Bonnets and Cloaks—Astrakan Fur, how obtained—A Duchess's Fancy—The Princess Metternich's Winter Costume—Parisian Ladies of the "Monde"—The Ladies' Club.

Paris, Friday, November 30, 1860.

THE Ministerial changes of course form the leading topic of conversation as of correspondence this week. The gentlemen are deeply engrossed in discussing this important subject, and therefore I suppose I may be permitted to touch upon it. But do not be alarmed! I shall not endeavour to give you a sketch of the past political life of the persons retiring from office, or my idea of the future policy of those entering upon their duties. I shall merely give a little anecdote, which possesses the merit of being true, and of remaining as yet untold. M. Fould, ex-Minister of State, has, it is well known, for years, been the constant follower of the changing fortunes of the Emperor. To prove that even resignation o office had not modified his old feeling of affection, M. Fould, when he went to take *congé* of his Sovereign, said, "Sire, in taking leave of your Majesty, I desire to assure you that in the future, as in the past, my fortune, my exertions, and my life are ever at your Majesty's disposal." Charmed with this speech, the Emperor rose, and with a warm embrace, said, "*Mon cher* Fould, those sentiments I receive with joy, as they prove to me that though I have lost a minister, I still preserve a friend."

The other day, a pedestriau was fortunate enough to find in the Avenue des Champs Elysées, a most beautiful and curious *bijou*, which he immediately conveyed to the Prefecture of Police. It is a ring, enriched with a fine ruby, upon which stone is set a royal crown and the letters "V.R.," all in diamonds. The ruby flies open when a secret spring is touched, and underneath is an almost imperceptible stereoscope, the glasses of which are hardly larger than pins' heads, and yet so great is their power that they cause to appear as large as small visiting cards the portraits of the Prince Consort and the Prince of Wales, which are underneath. These portraits are invisible to the naked eye; yet with the miniature stereoscope here employed, even the titles of those distinguished persons, written underneath the portraits, are distinctly visible. This ring, which must of course belong to the royal family of England, has been recognised by the maker as one which he sent to that Court, but which, with many other valuable jewels ordered, never reached its destination, the whole *coffret* having been stolen from a railway station. The police are making active exertions for the discovery of the author of this daring robbery.

In the present dearth of wit and repartee in this "work o' day world," it is a pleasure to record a little *bon mot* like the following. The scene passed in the drawing-room of an American lady, who, in spite of her democratic birth and ideas, has weekly assemblies of all that is noble and aristocratic in Paris. The conversation turning upon the deplorable events of 1793, a young Count of the Empire related the wrongs that his ancestors had suffered in those melancholy days. At this moment Monsieur T. was announced. "Ah, Madame," said the Count, "there is a charming *garçon*—my best friend—yet he is that which of all things

I most detest, a Republican." "*Vraiment !*" said the fair daughter of Columbia, "*les Républicains sont donc bien à détester ?*" "*Mais oui !*" said the aristocratic sufferer from the fury of the French Republicans of 1793. The lady smiled. The count perceived his error—he had forgotten her birth and predilections. The laugh was against him—his gallantry temporarily involved. He redeemed it the next day; for before breakfast a liveried servant had brought a bouquet, the flowers of which were so arranged as to represent the American flag. The standard concealed beneath its fragrant stripes and camelia stars the following couplet, written in the count's hand :—

"Les Républicains j'abhorre,
Les *Républicaines* j'adore ;
Et tout ceci pour vous montrer
Ce que fait le final *e*."

The lady graciously overlooked the word *adoré*, excusing it as a poet's licence; but, fearing licence might degenerate into liberty, has declared she will never attempt repartee again.

The long-expected ballet, *Le Papillon*, has at last been performed at the Grand Opera. There had been great indecision in regard to the name. The authors feared that, in spite of Mdlle. Livry's light-footedness, the title might provoke invidious comparisons. The story recurred to memory of the unthinking mother who named her daughter "Grace," which when the girl reached woman's estate proved to be a sad misnomer. But Taglioni insisted upon *Papillon*, and her fiat was absolute. The first representation was, of course, brilliant; the Emperor and all the ladies and gentlemen of the Court being present, together with as many as could obtain seats of the noble and wealthy foreigners now

in town. The music is exceedingly pretty, and uncommonly well suited for dancing; but I must say I agree with those who objected to the "Butterfly" appellative. If I had been called upon, I should have christened the piece after the "Grasshopper;" Mdlle. Livry's long thin limbs being exactly like those of that inoffensive but much-abused insect, while her terrific jumps most singularly keep up the resemblance. The affair is most exquisitely put upon the stage, the last scene far exceeding anything I have ever seen in brilliancy and fairy effect. Mdlle. Livry was called for at the close of the ballet, and appeared, leading on her preceptress, the once adored Taglioni. The pupil is incontestably the *danseuse* of the day. She is very young, and it is likely a few years will give her lithe figure that roundness we expect in the votaries of Terpsichore.

Quilted bonnets are very much worn this year. They are usually made with the soft or hanging crown, and of course are only worn with *demi-toilettes*. Somtimes they are stitched with a different coloured silk from the material itself; as for instance, black silk or satin run with green, red, or blue silk. I saw one composed of black satin, with narrow gold braid sewed over the stitching. But gold is hardly consistent with the *négligé* character of the bonnet. The patterns for quilting are quite varied. They are no longer confined to the squares, which at one time were the only choice of those who desired quilted bonnets. Now the material is sent to be marked like braiding, and the quilting is therefore very even, as of course the lines must be carefully followed. "The walls of Troy" pattern is very pretty and new for bonnets.

The last novelty in cloak-trimming is that black curly fur, called "Astrakan," which made its appearance at the close of last winter. I say, made its appearance—I mean among

the civilised world—for it has been used from time immemorial by the higher class of Persians. These disgustingly dirty, but no doubt highly interesting persons have their hats, or *chapeaux*, or whatever they call their sugar-loafed headgear, trimmed with this fur—almost as great a rarity as soap and water in their country, being nothing less than the fur of the *unborn* black sheep. Imagine how many "mothers of the fold" are sacrificed in Persia to obtain this object of capricious fancy. If all the "Astracan" worn in Paris this year had come to us in this barbarous manner, shepherds and shepherdesses might go hang up their crooks and themselves at once, for their flocks must have been exterminated by this one of fashion's freaks. But some ingenious person has managed to imitate the article in woollen stuff. Then, again, the coats of young white sheep are dyed to look like those of their little black brethren. By this new whim of taste the "black sheep of the flock" (a term usually synonymous with everything that is bad) is suddenly raised to a high degree of importance. "So wags the world."

The bad weather has caused a vast number of Balmoral petticoats to make their appearance. Those coming from England carried the day until one of the celebrated dressmakers induced the Duchess de M—— to wear rather a novel one, manufactured here; it was composed of red merino, and had sewed round the bottom black oilcloth, about a quarter of a yard wide. Patent leather Balmoral boots, reaching far above the ankle, and red stockings, accompanied this singular petticoat, which reminded me of the costume of the Witches in *Macbeth*, as the upper portion of the oilcloth was cut into deep points.

Altogether, the winter fashions have this year a decided tendency to the "fast" style. Cloaks, cut very short, are

composed of thick shaggy cloths, ornamented with large buttons; the sleeves almost tight, and rather on the "peg-top" principle. With their tiny hands, coquettishly placed in the capacious pockets of this rather peculiar great-coat, and their little feet encased in three-guinea boots of a studied coarseness, our Parisian belles may daily be seen promenading near the ornamental water in the Bois de Boulogne. The Princess Metternich wore yesterday a black velvet dress—a thick grey coat as described above—a black velvet bonnet with white lace curtain, trimming light blue feathers underneath, and blue velvet strings—gloves, lemon-coloured. This lady, who is far from being pretty, has been called the leader of the *ton*, and the title she has undoubtedly acquired by the readiness with which she adopts fashions which please her, whether they are *risquées* or not. Peculiar dresses, that many another lady would shrink from wearing, for fear of fixing more "attention than any modest dame can meet without a blush," are eagerly seized upon by the Princess. It appears that this lady's principal topic of conversation is her own ugliness. She laughs at it, and calls herself *le singe à la mode*. Of her it is that a very high personage (of course of the male sex) said, "Elle était inventée pour prouver que la beauté n'est pas nécessaire."

These poor ladies of the "Monde!" one cannot be severe with them when one reflects that they have no earthly employment to occupy their brains, and not enough of the commodity to find any for themselves. To change a life of dreary monotonous luxury, they rush to any extreme—excess in dress in some, simple desire of admiration in others, while with a large proportion laying aside the *convenances* is a most common method of producing a piquant change of ideas. It has been said that nothing resembles a *grisette* so much as a

grande dame; and never have I been so struck with the truth of this as within the last month. Walking on the Boulevards with a female friend in the evening—than which their sainted grandmothers would sooner have attempted Blondin's perilous trip over Niagara—visiting theatres, where the only amusement is *effrénée* dancing, and songs full of vulgar inuendos—these are the amusements of the *dames du plus grande monde* of the present day. This, though taken up by them, did not originate with French ladies. It began with a Russian noblewoman, Mme. de ——koff, and the Polish ——ska, and the Spanish ——do; the same ladies who have organized for themselves, at a celebrated German watering place, a Ladies' Club, where lying on divans all day long, smoking cigarettes, drinking champagne, receiving their admirers, and reading French novels of the worst stamp, they manage to kill time. And all they give in exchange for this desideratum is honour, self-esteem, health, strength, an originally noble mind, beauty, love, and religion! "En verité, très peu de chose!" but enough to frighten any one who, albeit of their enviable (?) *monde*, knows—

"——— this truth (enough for man to know),
Virtue alone is happiness below;
The only point where human bliss stands still,
And tastes the good without the fall to ill."

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